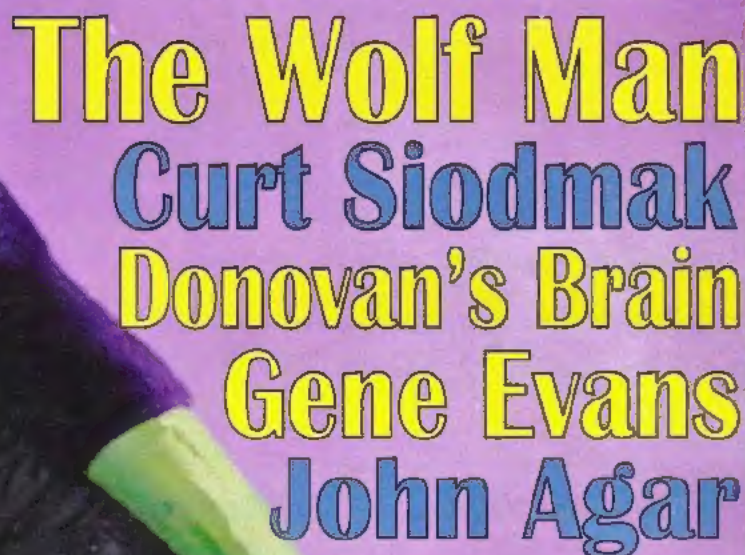


The Magazine of Mystery and Horror



# The Wolf Man

Curt Siodmak

## Donovan's Brain

Gene Evans

## John Agar



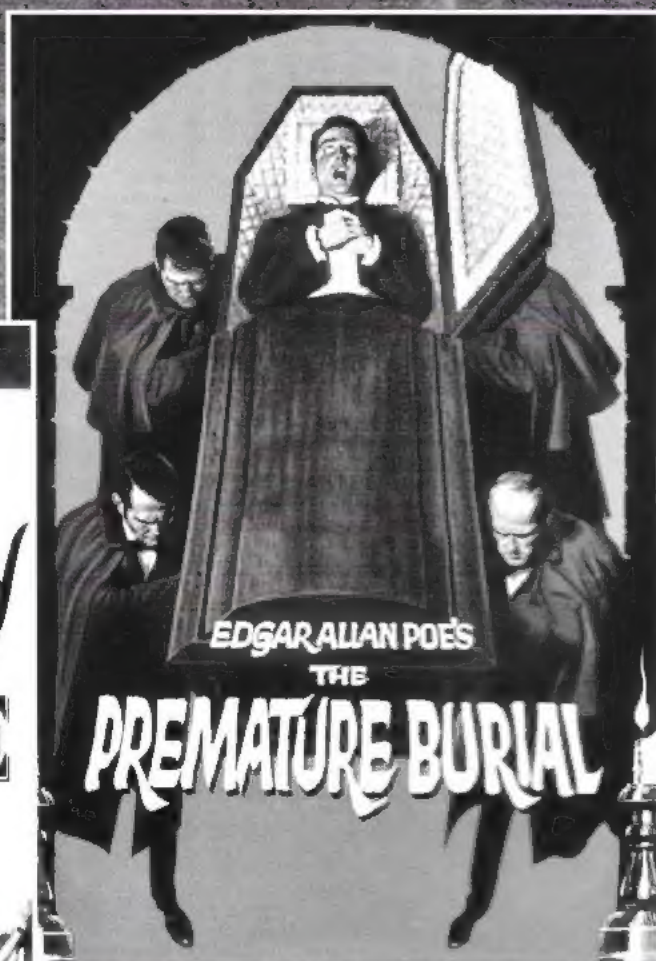
DISPLAY IN FILM SECTION



# BRAIN FROM PLANET APOUS \* SHADOW OF FU MANCHU



**TWO  
ORIGINAL MOTION  
PICTURE SOUNDTRACKS  
ON ONE CD!**



**MUSIC COMPOSED  
AND CONDUCTED BY  
RONALD STEIN**

Limited Pressing of 3000 copies.

Digitally restored from the  
original master recordings.

Both scores never before  
released in any format.

Includes deluxe booklet  
containing interviews with  
director Roger Corman  
and actor Vincent Price,  
plus rare behind-the-scenes photos  
from both films.

**AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY FROM**  
**www.percepto.com**

Or send check or money order for \$19.95 + \$3.00 for shipping/handling to:  
Percepto Records • P.O. Box 70075 • Pasadena, CA • 91117

PUBLISHER/EDITOR  
Richard Valley

MANAGING EDITOR  
Tom Amorosi

ASSISTANT EDITOR  
Dan Clayton

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
Ken Hanke

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR  
Kevin G. Shinnick  
Phone: (201) 941-0897  
Fax: (201) 943-7464

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR  
Forrest J Ackerman

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION  
(201) 445-0034 / Fax (201) 445-1496

E-mail—reditor@aol.com

Website—www.scarletstreet.com

INFORMATION  
(201) 445-0034 / Fax (201) 445-1496

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Jeff Allen, John F. Black, Michael Anthony Carlisle, Michael Draine, Martin Grams Jr., Erich Kuersten, John J. Mathews (The News Hound), Barry Monush, Terry Pace, Brooke Perry, Kevin G. Shinnick, Tony Strauss, Drew Sullivan, Chris Workman

RESEARCH CONSULTANTS  
John Brunas, Laser Joe Faila

WEST COAST CORRESPONDENT  
Todd Livingston

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS  
Bill Chancellor, John E. Payne

SCARLET STREET WEBMASTER  
David Hoffman



#### SPECIAL THANKS

Forrest J Ackerman, John Agar, Mary Amorosi, Anchor Bay Entertainment, A&E Home Video, Ted Bohus, Ronald V. Borst/Hollywood Movie Posters, Chris Carter, Creepy Classics, Kevin Clement, David Del Valle, Elite Entertainment Inc., Gene Evans, Harriet Harvey, Image Entertainment, Kino on Video, Lawrence Knapp, Garrett Lee, Alvin H. Marill, Edward McGoey, Joe Moe, Jerry Ohlinger's, The Page of Fu Manchu (<http://www.njin.net/~knapp/FuManchu.htm>), Ann Palladino, Toni Palladino, Paramount Pictures, Pioneer Home Video, Sinister Cinema, Radio Spirits, Curt Siodmak, Troma Films, Universal Pictures, Phyl Valley, Jeff Walker, Marc Walkow, Warner Bros.



Copyright © 2000 by Scarlet Street, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. Scarlet Street® (ISSN 10588612) is published bimonthly for \$35 per year (\$6.95 for a single issue) by Scarlet Street, Inc., 247 Boulevard, Glen Rock, New Jersey 07452. Periodical postage paid at Ridgewood, New Jersey, and additional office. POSTMASTER: Address changes to Scarlet Street, P.O. Box 604, Glen Rock, NJ 07452. Scarlet Street assumes no responsibility for the authority of advertisers to sell transferred property. Products advertised and editorial views expressed are not necessarily endorsed by Scarlet Street. All rights to letters sent to Scarlet Street will be treated as unconditionally assigned to Scarlet Street for publication unless otherwise noted. Please send all correspondence to P.O. Box 604, Glen Rock, NJ 07452.



## Features and Departments

- 4 Scarlet Letters**
- 9 Frankly Scarlet**
- 14 The News Hound**
- 16 Elvis Lives!**
- 18 Screen and Screen Again**
- 28 The Wolf Man on DVD**
- 32 Forrest J Ackerman's  
Crimson Chronicles**
- 34 Ygor: Horror's Cock-eyed Optimist**
- 38 Inside The X-Files**
- 40 The Man With Three Brains:  
Curt Siodmak**
- 46 Mr. Donovan Steps Out**
- 52 Man of Steel: Gene Evans**
- 58 Murder by Radio:  
The Shadow of Fu Manchu**
- 62 Arous and Psyche:  
The Brain From Planet Arous**
- 66 The Man With the Brains:  
John Agar**
- 74 Book Ends**
- 77 Classifieds**

COVER: THE WOLF MAN (1941),  
FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943)



# Scarlet Letters

Just read the interview in *Scarlet Street* #38! Oh, my gosh! It was wonderful! You did a wonderful job. Everything was so accurate! You didn't miss a beat.

You know, when you condense the activities of a lifetime, you really get a great overall picture. I kept thinking, "Gee, I'd love to live that life!" Then, I realized . . . I did!

It was, and still is, a wonderful life, but it's as though the past is all prologue. I cherish the memories, but am involved in new activities, with new dreams and goals. Will keep you posted as new things develop.

Again, thank you so much, Richard, for such a great interview. I just wish every interviewer could do such an accurate, interesting, professional job. It is much appreciated. As always, best "witches."

Kasey Rogers  
Calabasas, CA

And thank you, Kasey! The former Laura Elliott and I be making some convention appearances in the near future, arranged with the help of *Scarlet Street*, and I'm happy to say I'll be hosting her Q&A sessions.

Dear Richard Valley and the *Scarlet Street* staff: I wanted to send you a little note to say that a friend of mine has been passing on his last few editions of *Scarlet Street* magazine to me. Well, I am hooked! What a well-written publication you have! As for your "hidden agenda" . . . Hollywood has always had that agenda, and as long as there are talented and creative people working in show biz, there always will be. Those movies and those actors bring back vivid memories. It's nice to know that people are interested in pictures we made years ago, that we thought would be, or in some cases should be forgotten. Bravo to you all for your good work!

Phyllis Coates  
Sonoma, CA

High praise, indeed! After all, who better than the Daily Planet's Lois Lane knows what constitutes good writing . . .?

I'd never thought that the cover illustration of a magazine would prompt me to write a letter, but, hey, if that evocatively grainy one on *Scarlet Street* #38 doesn't double your off-the-rack sales, I don't know what more it's gonna take. Right there is the essence of your magazine, the Kiss of *Scarlet Street*. Only in this magazine would I, after all these years, find the actual names of those three spooky wenches who—let's face it—provide the only memorable frisson in the entire film. Dorothy Tree had a moderately successful career in the studio system of that era, but who were those other two? Were they Universal employees, like, say, switchboard operators or wardrobe assistants? Or relatives of

other studio employees? Or one-shot wonders straight off the casting couch? Wouldn't you like to find out and then pass on that trivia to your ultra-sophisticated readers?

Speaking of the Kiss of *Scarlet Street*, and since I'm here already, I'd like to give a kudos (that's right, kudos is a singular noun) to unsung staff members Ross Care and Richard Scrivani, who wrote the articles on movie music in this issue. Articles like those hold the magazine together better than the staples! In fact, these regularly-appearing articles have got me seriously thinking about taking a night class in Music Appreciation at the local junior college to familiarize myself more with the technical jargon and that aspect of the film-watching experience. No kidding!

Finally, congratulations to Ken Hanke for the completion of *PARAMOUNT HORRORS* . . . but, Ken, don't stop now; you've got a good thing going: Columbia now at bat, Warners on deck, and Fox in the hole. And, of course, all the credit to you, Richard, as publisher/editor, for somehow bringing it all together and making it happen every two months.

Mark Angelcyk  
Kewanee, Illinois

Encouraged by the enthusiasm of Ken Hanke for *THE UNINVITED* in *SS* #38, I purchased a video cassette and took a second look at the film, which I had not seen

**WANTED! MORE  
READERS LIKE...**



**Kasey Rogers**



since its original release in England in 1944. On that occasion, I was accompanied by William K. Everson who, in his book *Classics of the Horror Film*, described it as "quite probably the movies' best ghost story," an opinion that I shared at the time and which is now quoted on the video box.

Alas, what I just saw bore very little resemblance to what I remembered from 56 years ago. The film now seems no more than a clever amalgam of Hollywood clichés about the supernatural.

Ray Milland, impeccable in his performance as always, nevertheless clearly has his tongue in cheek throughout, to balance the deadly serious acting of Ruth Hussey as his sister. With one exception, all the other characters are stock, led by Cornelia Otis Skinner's impersonation of Gale Sondergaard trying to outdo Judith Anderson's Mrs. Danvers in *REBECCA*. The exception is Gail Russell, whose luminous performance is as perceptive and touching as it appeared a half-century ago.

The ghostly trappings of wilting flowers, unseen sobbings, wraithlike apparitions, and a seance that goes haywire, ending with one of Hollywood's most hackneyed climaxes, the cliff-top rescue, are presently strictly by the numbers. The result is that you can't take the film seriously for one moment.

The passage of time creates strange paradoxes. We all know how many movies that were once regarded quite lightly have since been reevaluated and become classics to be included in most opinion polls about the best films of all time; unfortunately, the reverse is also true. Some of our most cherished memories would be better left untouched lest they turn to dust.

Richard Gordon  
Gordon Films, Inc.  
New York, NY

Richard Valley proves he's the best publisher and editor of zines with every issue of *Scarlet Street*, one of the best writers every time he contributes an article to *Scarlet Street*, and one of the top interviewers with his wow of a Kasey Rogers interview in *Scarlet Street* #38. (His only equal is Rick McKay, and only *Scarlet Street* has enough brains to publish him!) There should be an awards show for horror magazines, because if

*Continued on page 8*



15 Free Catalogs

Eyestopping!

Wholesale

Retail

**Master**

FULL COLOR REPRODUCTIONS

email

acmeposter@aol.com

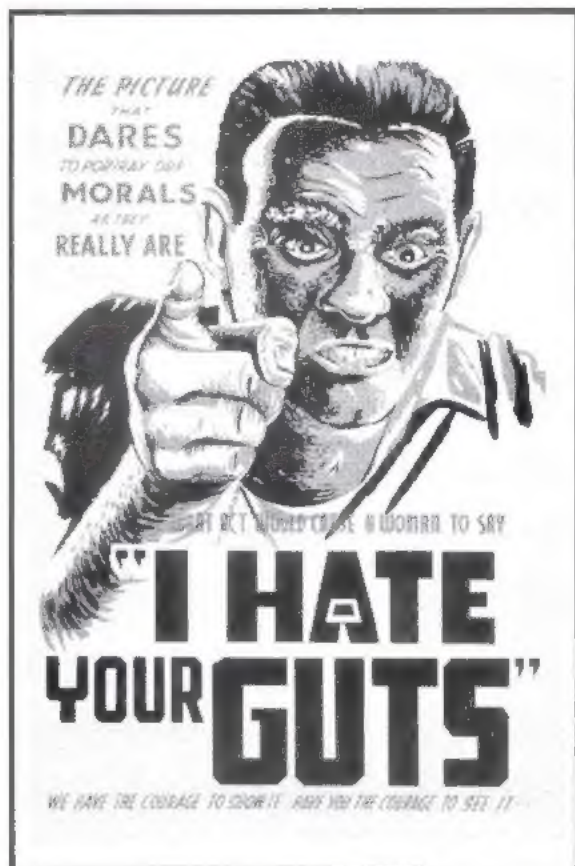


**Prints™**

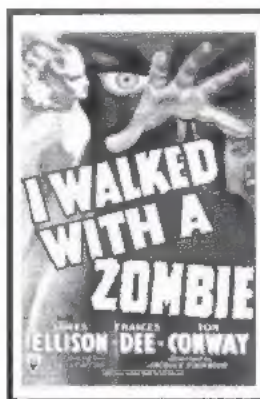
CLASSIC MOVIE POSTER ART

Visit

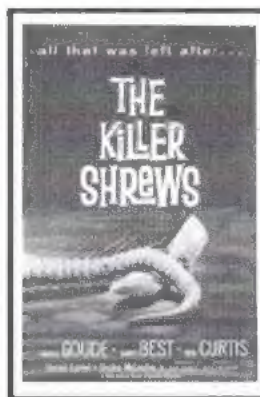
www.acmeposter.com



MP4331



MP4518



MP4488

Choose One  
Free Catalog:

1. Bad Girls
2. Cartoons
3. Classics
4. Comedy
5. Cowboys
6. Foreign
7. Horror
8. Icons
9. Leading Ladies
10. Leading Men
11. Musicals
12. Serials & Magic
13. Sci fi
14. Silents
15. Sports



MP4491



MP4517



MP4352



MP4482



MP4371



Masterprints: Classic Movie Poster Art 11" x 17" Vertical & 11" x 14" Horizontal  
\$15 each, 3 for \$40, 6 for \$75, 9 for \$100 + \$5 S&H Free Showcase Display Sleeve

**Acme Movie Poster Company**

P.O. Box 1121 Glastonbury, CT 06033-6121

Call: (860) 547-0336

Credit Cards Accepted

Fax: (860) 547-0357



**BIG  
MONSTER  
SUMMER  
SALE!!!**

# Scarlet Street®

The Magazine of Mystery and Horror



#1 (Reprint): Two terrific covers (including the original), a wrap-around History of *Scarlet Street*, plus the original, unaltered, complete-with-typo text, including POIROT, DARK SHADOWS, PSYCHO IV, SUPERBOY, THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES, FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND, THE FLASH, Robin the Boy Wonder, HOUSE OF USHER, and more!

## Here's the word on the Street!

Gosh! Wow! Boy, oh boy! *Scarlet Street* has taken a quantum jump into the lead among imagi-movie magazines!

—Forrest J Ackerman

Top notch . . . superbly presented . . . the sort of crisply produced mag that just begs to be browsed through before focusing your attention on any of its splendid articles. A great mag.

—Magazines of the Movies

Everything about *Scarlet Street* appeals to the perverse lust for lunacy in me. Congratulations on a job well done.

—Rex Reed

You'd be crazy not to buy *Scarlet Street*.

—George Baxt



#4: Christopher Lee, RETURN OF DRACULA, Forrest J Ackerman, Zachary, Gerard Christopher, BURN WITCH BURN, WEIRD WOMAN, and more!



#5: Jack Larson, Barbara Hale, Christopher Lee, Patrick Macnee, Jeremy Brett, Edward Hardwicke, THE HOUSE THAT SCREAMED, Universal vs. Hammer, and more!



#6: CIRCUS OF HORRORS, Noel Neill, David Nelson, MASTER BLACKMAILER, George East, Erica Remberg, GORG, BERSERK, BREAKS, and more!



#7: Vincent Price, John Moulder-Brown, Yvette Vickers, TOMBOY LIGIA, Joan Hickson, BLUE BEARD, Elizabeth Shepherd, THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE, and more!



#8: Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Jeremy Brett, Rosalie Williams, STOKER'S DRACULA, John Moulder-Brown, DRACULA'S DAUGHTER MARTIN, and more!



#9: Richard Denning, Joan Bennett, Thomas Beck, CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OPERA, Peter Cushing, Veronica Carlson, THE BLACK SCORPION, and more!



#10: Tommy Kirk, Tim Considine, Beverly Garland, THE ALIGATOR PEOPLE, THE HARDY BOYS, TEN LITTLE INDIANS, BATMAN ANIMATED, and more!



#11: Shelley Winters, Curtis Harrington, Gale Sondergaard, WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?, TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE, and more!



#12: Ruth Roman, THE KILLING KIND, THE UNINVITED, Ruth Hussey, I BURY THE LIVING, Aron Kincaid, Carroll Borland, Bela Lugosi Scrapbook, and more!



#13: Ida Lupino, Terry Kilburn, Bill Campbell, Lovcraft on Film, Price Tribute, ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, FIEND WITH-OUT A FACE, and more!



#14: Barbara Shelley, Ann Blyth, Robert Bloch, PSYCHO, Jack Larson, Noel Neill, Edward Hardwicke, John Waters, VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED, and more!



#15: Johnny Sheffield, Acquanetta, Michael Ripper, TARZAN AND THE LEOPARD WOMAN, Quatermass, Hammer in Hollywood, Marcus D'Amico, and more!



#16: X-FILES, NIGHT STALKER, Darren McGavin, David Duchovny, Gillian Anderson, Jack Ginnage, Carol Ann Susi, Doug Hutchison, INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE, ED WOOD, and more!



#17: Ann Doran, Dubbs Greer, Herman Cohen, IN THE TERROR, Jan Murray, WHO KILLED TEDDY BEAR?, Gary Conway, Don Johnson, THE SKULL, The Mysteries of James Dean, and more!



#18: Michael Gough, BATMAN FOREVER, INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE, TALES FROM THE HOOD, SPIDER-MAN, Heman Cohen, BLACK ZOO, Sian Lee, THE X-FILES, Tarzan, and more!



#19: ASTUDY IN TERROR, John Neville, Bob Kane, BATMAN FOREVER, JUDGE DREDD, Brad Pitt, Joel Schumacher, Robert Quarry, William Marshall, THE OUTER LIMITS, BLACULA, and more!



#20: Deborah Kerr, Martin Stephens, THE INNOCENTS, Russ Tamblyn, THE HAUNTING, Jeremy Brett, David Wayne, Elizabeth Russell, PORTRAIT OF ENNIE, X-FILES, Much Pilgrimage, and more!



#21: Jeremy Brett Tribute, Farley Granger, Pat Hitchcock, Hillary Brooke, REAR WINDOW, INVADERS FROM MARS, Raymond Burr, Cornell Woolrich, Zachary, Monster in the Closet, and more!





# Scarlet Street®

The Magazine of Mystery and Horror

## Here's the word on the Street!

Gosh! Wow! Boy, oh boy! *Scarlet Street* has taken a quantum jump into the lead among imagi-movie magazines!

—Forrest J Ackerman

Top notch . . . superbly presented . . . the sort of crisply produced mag that just begs to be browsed through before focusing your attention on any of its splendid articles. A great mag.

—Magazines of the Movies

Everything about *Scarlet Street* appeals to the perverse lust for lunacy in me. Congratulations on a job well done.

—Rex Reed

You'd be crazy not to buy *Scarlet Street*.

—George Baxt



#1 (Reprint): Two terrific covers (including the original), a wrap-around History of *Scarlet Street*, plus the original, unaltered, complete-with-typo text, including POIROT, DARK SHADOWS, PSYCHO IV, SUPERBOY, THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES, FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND, THE FLASH, Robin the Boy Wonder, HOUSE OF USHER, and more!



#2 (Reprint): HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM, ATLANTIS, FLASH, SUPERBOY, PERRY MASON, DARK SHADOWS, Golden Years of Sherlock, and more!



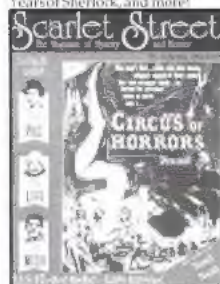
#3 (Reprint): THE MAD DOCTOR, Martin Kosleck, John Howard, THE LODGER, BATMAN, NIGHT OF THE HUNTER, BATMAN, Horror Italian Style, and more!



#4: Christopher Lee, RETURN OF DRACULA, Forrest J Ackerman, Zachary, Gerard Christopher, BURN WITCH BURN, WEIRD WOMAN, and more!



#5: Jack Larson, Barbara Hale, Christopher Lee, Patrick Macnee, Jeremy Brett, Edward Hardwicke, THE HOUSE THAT SCREAMED, Universal vs. Hammer, and more!



#6: CIRCUS OF HORRORS, Noel Neill, David Nelson, MASTER BLACKMAILER, George East, Erica Remberg, GORG, BERSERK, BREAKS, and more!



#7: Vincent Price, John Moulder-Brown, Yvette Vickers, TOMBOY LIGIA, Joan Hickson, BLUE BEARD, Elizabeth Shepherd, THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE, and more!



#8: Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Jeremy Brett, Rosalie Williams, STOKER'S DRACULA, John Moulder-Brown, DRACULA'S DAUGHTER MARTIN, and more!



#9: Richard Denning, Joan Bennett, Thomas Beck, CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OPERA, Peter Cushing, Veronica Carlson, THE BLACK SCORPION, and more!



#10: Tommy Kirk, Tim Considine, Beverly Garland, THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE, THE HARDY BOYS, TEN LITTLE INDIANS, BATMAN ANIMATED, and more!



#11: Shelley Winters, Curtis Harrington, Gale Sondergaard, WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?, TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE, and more!



#12: Ruth Roman, THE KILLING KIND, THE UNINVITED, Ruth Hussey, I BURY THE LIVING, Aron Kincaid, Carroll Borland, Bela Lugosi Scrapbook, and more!



#13: Ida Lupino, Terry Kilburn, Bill Campbell, Lovell Crafton, Phil Price, Tribute, ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, FIEND WITH-OUT A FACE, and more!



#14: Barbara Shelley, Ann Blyth, Robert Bloch, PSYCHO, Jack Larson, Noel Neill, Edward Hardwicke, John Waters, VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED, and more!



#15: Johnny Sheffield, Aquanetta, Michael Ripper, TARZAN AND THE LEOPARD WOMAN, Quatermass, Hammer in Hollywood, Marcus D'Amico, and more!



#16: X-FILES, NIGHT STALKER, Darren McGavin, David Duchovny, Gillian Anderson, Jack Ginnage, Carol Ann Susi, Doug Hutchison, INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE, ED WOOD, and more!



#17: Ann Doran, Dubbs Greer, Herman Cohen, IN THE TERROR, Jan Murray, WHO KILLED TEDDY BEAR?, Gary Conway, Don Johnson, THE SKULL, The Mysteries of James Dean, and more!



#18: Michael Gough, BATMAN FOREVER, INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE, TALES FROM THE HOOD, SPIDER-MAN, Heman Cohen, BLACK ZOO, Sian Lee, THE X-FILES, Tarzan, and more!



#19: A STUDY IN TERROR, John Neville, Bob Kane, BATMAN FOREVER, JUDGE DREDD, Brad Pitt, Joel Schumacher, Robert Quarry, William Marshall, THE OUTER LIMITS, DRACULA, and more!



#20: Deborah Kerr, Martin Stephens, THE INNOCENTS, Russ Tamblyn, THE HAUNTING, Jeremy Brett, David Wayne, Elizabeth Russell, PORTRAIT OF EMMILIE, X-FILES, Much Pilgrimage, and more!



#21: Jeremy Brett Tribute, Farley Granger, Pat Hitchcock, Hillary Brooke, REAR WINDOW, INVADERS FROM MARS, Raymond Burr, Cornell Woolrich, Zachary, Monster in the Closet, and more!

## SCARLET LETTERS

*Continued from page 4*

there was *Scarlet Street*'s Reditor would win every category!

Jackie Cruz

San Francisco, CA

*I very much doubt I'd win Best Costume, Jackie, not if I have to compete with SPFX magazine publisher Ted Bohus and his vast array of Hawaiian shirts, but I promise to put in a little work on the wardrobe now that I've dropped a few pounds. Thanx for the enthusiastic support, and by the way, be sure to pick up a copy of SPFX the next time you're at your local mag rack!*

In the eye of the beholder, I am sure, but I am denying the verity of Ken Hanke's statement in his SS #38 article DRACULA ON DVD (second to final paragraph) that "this is quite the best DRACULA has ever looked . . . it is stunning." The Encore Edition laser disc from Universal is the better-looking product (and it is far from stunning), while the DVD image is dark and lacking definition in comparison. After sitting through the DVD version of DRACULA, not believing that Universal had indeed created a lesser digital version of the classic, I pulled out my ancient LD and only had to check the interior coach sequence at the movie's beginning to realize that my assumption was correct. To say "this is quite the best the Spanish version of DRACULA has ever looked . . . it is stunning," would be the more accurate conclusion.

A final note. Am amazed how you are able to schedule overlapping material in each issue! A feature article with related insets, is followed by an article on a performer appearing in a movie covered within that feature article, and then articles follow which cover movies made by this same performer or cover the director of a movie in which the star later appeared, and so on and on. There are plen-

tiful degrees of separation in this world of mystery and horror movies. It is to wonder. Thanks for an informative reading experience.

Greg Shoemaker

greg.shoemaker@metzgers.com

Thanks for including my piece on the TOPPER series in SS #38, as part of your excellent two-issue salute to Thorne Smith's enduring set of characters. A number of years ago, I actually wrote a lengthier profile of Anne Jeffreys, which appeared in *Emmy Magazine*. Responding to it, Ms. Jeffreys sent me several autographed pictures and a wonderful letter, both of which I shall always treasure. My sincere hope is that I will still have the opportunity to someday meet her.

About a decade ago, I had a contractual position with a public broadcasting affiliate to come up with several concepts for what they called "clip shows" (i.e. Hollywood documentaries). One of these I developed and which I tried hard to push was a series of interviews with a half dozen character actors whose careers spanned many years in film, but who, because they never attained great stardom, were rarely the focus of interviews. I intended to call the series THE RELIABLES and came up with a list of individuals to be interviewed, including Noah Berry Jr., Elisha Cook Jr., and others. Unfortunately, the head honchos at the station vetoed the premise, feeling that these folks weren't well known or interesting enough to garnish viewer interest.

That's what makes your interviews and profiles of lesser-known though familiar performers so valuable and appreciated. Often it is not the biggest stars who have the most interesting accounts or stories, but rather these wonderful supporting players whose unique perspective, obtained through years of activity on stage, screen, radio, and television, provide the

meatiest and most accurate picture of the entertainment business. Thanks for continuing to showcase these actors.

Bruce Dettman

San Francisco, CA

*And thanx for helping make Scarlet Street #38 such a success, Bruce. We're with you all the way—these "reliables" are the true history of Hollywood.*

Just delighted and excited to see that *Scarlet Street*'s hidden agenda now includes the wild, wacky, and erotic world of foot fetishism! (Gasp! Sigh!)

Your readers may want to know that the new teen horror film FINAL DESTINATION includes a cute young guy dying in his bare feet! And his death throes include several shots of him wiggling his toes! (Just thinking about it makes me want to reach for the poppers!) Of course, Johnny Depp did a rather graphic barefoot scene in THE ASTRONAUT'S WIFE, which was the high point of the movie. Heteros and lesbians take note: the film features several closeups of Charlize Theron's well-pedicured tootsies! Of course, John Karlen of DARK SHADOWS showed both his bare ass and his bare feet in 1971's DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS. Feet and ass shown together are always a winning combo!

Perhaps other readers can write in and let us know what other horror films show cute guys in their bare feet. Chaney Jr.'s barefoot appearance as the Wolf Man doesn't count, though. Chaney wasn't cute—but his grandson Ron sure is!

I realize, of course, that I am now also promoting a hidden agenda, and bringing sexuality to fandom. Perhaps we can hold a prayer vigil at the next convention so that our soles can be saved!

Chris Winters

Hoboken, NJ

*Continued on page 10*

## Get Titilated On Scarlet Street Video!

**Y**es, Fright Fans, you can keep abreast of Hammer Horror on Scarlet Street Video, and that's not all! We're also your bloody source for . . .

**Universal Horror Classics**  
**Alfred Hitchcock**  
**Roger Corman/Edgar Allan Poe**

For a complete catalogue, send \$1 to Scarlet Street Video, PO Box 604, Glen Rock, NJ 07452





# Frankly Scarlet



I remember it this way. It didn't necessarily happen this way, but this is the way I remember it. We were all gathered in the house on the Boulevard in Glen Rock—Mom, Dad, and me (well, we lived there), and a whole gaggle of aunts, uncles, and cousins from Brooklyn, visiting for the weekend. It was the sixties, the living-room carpet was a deep green instead of the lush red it is now, and the Castro Convertible sofa was opened to accommodate as many of us watching the television as possible. A few years later, we would all group together to watch Duke Wayne in Howard Hawks' *RIO BRAVO* (1959), but on this particular night the antenna was bringing in the slightly fuzzy image of Sam Fuller's 1951 Korean War film *THE STEEL HELMET*.

My uncle, Jim Breslin, loved war movies—*THE SANDS OF IWO JIMA* (1949) with Wayne and John Agar was a special favorite—and it was probably he who chose *THE STEEL HELMET* for viewing. It certainly wasn't me. I was never one for war movies—not unless they starred Abbott and Costello and *The Andrews Sisters*—but the whole idea here was Family, so I watched, and I was there to hear the question that led to a family anecdote we all remember to this day.

The question was, "Who's that actor playing Sergeant Zack?"

And the answer was—nobody knew.

Now, I was notorious even then, at age 14 or 15, for knowing absolutely everything about movies and nothing about such vital matters as sports, so everyone figured I'd be Johnny on the spot with the answer. I wasn't. I had no idea. I was spotless. I vaguely recalled that he'd been the star of a kid's Western called *MY FRIEND FLICKA*, but I hadn't much liked *MY FRIEND FLICKA*—I was strictly a *LONE RANGER* man. The man on the TV screen was a complete stranger, and he remained one throughout the remainder of *THE STEEL HELMET* and well into the following day, when, with no *TV Guide* on hand and Leonard Maltin not even a gleam in a publisher's eye, Mom and Dad and the various aunts, uncles, and cousins were pouring through the few paltry movie books in my embryonic collection and still trying to figure out his identity.

Finally—somehow—the mystery was solved, and the name "Gene Evans" took on the preternatural power to make a group of otherwise average individuals burst into laughter. And for that reason, I was enormously pleased and more than a little amused when Terry Pace suggested he interview Gene Evans (pictured in *THE STEEL HELMET*) for *Scarlet Street*, and I quickly said yes. Sadly, "Sergeant Zack" died shortly after the interview was completed, and so the urgency to print was somewhat dissipated. But here, almost two years later, is Gene Evans' final and most comprehensive interview, published in the same issue as another long-planned chat—with *SANDS OF IWO JIMA* star John Agar. My Uncle Jimmy died many years ago and far, far too young, but if he was still around I know he'd get a real kick out of this issue. Certainly, I enjoyed putting it together. And I hope you all enjoy reading it . . .

\*\*\*

We left some information out of last issue's Record Rack—namely, where music lovers can get the compact disc recordings of the original soundtracks from *SHE* (1935) and *LOST HORIZON* (1937). They can be found at BYU Film Music Archives, 5030 Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

We also meant to mention that *Reptilicus—The Screenplay* is available for \$22 plus \$3.50 postage from Kip Doto, PO Box 8050, Coral Springs, FL 33075.

\*\*\*

Playgoers with a taste for gay theater are directed to New York's Vortex Theater Company. The Vortex regularly presents new work by gay and lesbian playwrights—though, truth to tell, most of the plays are by Robert Coles, including the recent *FLESH AND BLOOD* (Vince Catton, Brian Joseph Laughlin, Ned Stresen-Reuter, Marcello Cabezas, and Jo Benincasa are pictured), a murder mystery set in the world of porn films. Call 212-206-1764 for further info.

\*\*\*

Genre fans all know the name Jeff Rovin, author of *Return of the Wolf Man* (1998), among many other works, but what most don't know is that his lovely fiancée, Victoria Bundonis (pictured), is one hell of a fine cabaret singer. *Scarlet Street* managing editor Tom Amorosi and I had the great pleasure to see Victoria perform at Manhattan's Don't Tell Mama earlier this summer (as did *Famous Monsters of Film-land* publisher James Warren), and we recommend the experience to anyone who loves terrific pop standards sung stunningly well.

And if you must have something suitably, magically fantastic to perk your interview, Victoria sang David (The Chipmunks) Seville's "The Witch Doctor" and is being bugged by Jeff to add "The Blob" to her repertoire . . .

\*\*\*

Concluding our impromptu theater/cabaret survey, I want to recommend the Cultural Arts Playhouse in Old Bethpage,



Photo: Robert Cunningham

New York (1-516-694-3330), where the talented Denis Pessar recently directed an equally talented cast (Scott Earle, Craig E. Treubert, Dan Domenech, Sharon Bauer, Adam Slawitsky, and Brenda Festo, pictured) in *YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN*. A little later that evening, we attended a midnight performance of *THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW* by the same company, which had a different cast except for Craig Treubert as Brad—who, when Frank-N-furter crawled seductively into his bed, was found clutching his Linus security blanket.

And so it goes . . .

*Richard Valley*

## WANNA SEE SOMETHING WEIRD?

•AMAZING TRANSPLANTS•ALIEN ABDUCTIONS•ARCANE ANTICS•ABSURD ABOMINATIONS•  
•BLOOD FEASTS•BUXOM BURLESQUE BEAUTIES•BONGO-BEATING BEATNIKS•BACKWOODS  
BIMBOS•CAMPY CLASSICS•CREATURE FEATURES•CARNAL CUTIES•COTTON PICKIN'  
CHICKEN PICKERS•CRIME WAVE U.S.A.~DRAG-RACING DAREDEVILS•DUSK TO DAWN  
DRIVE-IN FLICKS•DEADLY DOLLS•DEMENTED DUDES•ELECTRIFYING EXPLOITATION•EVIL  
EXECUTIONERS•ENTERTAINING EXHIBITIONISTS•FRIGHTFUL FIENDS•FANTASTIC FREAKS•  
•GORE GORE GIRLS•GRINDHOUSE GHOULS•GORILLAS & GALS•HILLBILLY HIJINKS•  
•HAYSTACK HONEYS•HELL-RAISING HORRORS•HIGH SCHOOL HELLIONS•HOLLYWOOD'S  
WORLD OF FLESH•INDECENT DESIRES•ILLUSTRIOUS IDIOTS•J.D. JUNGLE-KINKY KICKS•  
•KUNG FU KILLERS•LOITERING LONGHAIRS•LEATHER-CLAD LADIES•LSD-LOVE-STARVED  
LUNATICS•MEGA MONDO MOVIES•MUSCLEBOUND MADMEN•MOTORCYCLE MAMAS•  
•MENACING MONSTERS•MAN-EATING MAIDENS•MIDDLE-AGED MANIACS•MIND-  
BOGGING MUTANTS•MIDNIGHT MADNESS•NUDES ON THE MOON•NAUGHTY NYMPHOS•  
•NUTTY NEWS & NONESUCH•AN ORGY OF ODDBALL ODDITIES•OVERSEXED OGRES•  
•PSYCHEDELIC PSYCHOS•PASSIONATE PUSSYCATS•PARANORMAL PRANKS•PECULIAR  
PEOPLE•QUACKS & QUICKIES•RIP-ROARING ROCK 'N ROLL•REDNECK REBELS•ROADSHOW  
RARITIES•RAMPAGING ROBOTS•SEXY SHOCKERS•SLEAZY SCHLOCK•STRANGE & SICK  
SUBJECTS•SHE DEVILS ON WHEELS•SWORDS & SANDALS•SPACE BABES•SPIES A GO-GO•  
•SCI-FI SPECTACULARS•SWINGING COEDS•TEENAGE GANG DEBS•TRASHY TRAILERS•  
•TWO THOUSAND MANIACS•TWISTED SEX•UFOS•UNABASHED & UNADULTERATED &  
UNASHAMED•VINTAGE VAMPS•VICIOUS VAMPIRES•VENGEFUL VILLAINS•VIXENS &  
VIRGINS•WICKED WOMEN•WILD WHEELS•WAYOUT WEREWOLVES•WEIRD & WONDERFUL  
WACKINESS•X-TREME X-CITEMENT•YANKS & YAHOOOS•ZOOT SUITS & ZANY ZOMBIES•

CHECK OUT OUR RECENTLY RENOVATED WEBSITE AT

**www.somethingweird.com**

OVER 2000 TITLES! ONLINE SHOPPING! TOP 50 LIST! REVIEWS! AND MORE!



Sideshow Monster  
Action Figures  
Series III

NOT SATISFIED WITH  
THE WAY  
YOUR WORLD IS?  
WELL, WHY NOT MAKE IT A  
MORE CREATIVE ONE?

WE HAVE:  
HARD TO FIND  
AND  
IMAGINATIVE CHARACTERS,  
NEW AND OLD CHARACTERS  
ALSO!

WE WORK TO KEEP  
PRICES LOW, UP TO  
10% TO 30% OFF RETAIL!

WE'RE ONLINE,  
SO IT'S CONVENIENT,  
WITH FAST SHIPPING,  
AND VERY FRIENDLY SERVICE!

VISIT US TODAY @  
**WWW.ABOYD.COM**  
the shop for your imagination

Limited Edition  
Frankenstein  
"Little Big Head"



Polar Lights  
"Robby The Robot"




Menagerie  
"Giant Gorilla"

### SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 8

Oh, you wild, crazed, insatiable Scarlet Street-ers! Give you an inch and you'll take . . . well, a foot!

Thanks for showing the feet of Mighty Lex Barker in SS #35. Do you have another shot of him that shows the soles of his bare feet? To the artist, this is a great subject. Perhaps your magazine would make the 21st-century artists aware of this subject matter. In the forties, it was the legs of Betty Grable. In the fifties, it was Jane Russell. Now, it's Lex Barker!

L.T. Gray

West Hollywood, CA

The legs of Grable, the feet of Barker, and the what of Jane Russell? Never mind! I've had enough of this foot fetishism! Begone with you! Shoe! Shoe! Aw, well, one more time . . .



In his DVD review of BUCK PRIVATES COME HOME (SS #37), Mark Clark finds it curious that a movie poster advertising DEAD OF NIGHT should be visible in the background.

There's nothing curious about it. DEAD OF NIGHT, which was released in Great Britain by Ealing, was distributed in the United States by Universal, who distributed a number of British films in the late forties and early fifties.

Incidentally, when Universal released DEAD OF NIGHT over here it was shorn of two of its five episodes, which made a bit of a hash of the climax. Later, in September 1955, a New York television station showed the original, longer British print, which is the one now generally seen.

I enjoyed Ken Hanke's article on TOPPER RETURNS, which was always a favorite of mine. A footnote that might interest you: Hal Roach recycled Werner Heymann's musical score for the later WHO KILLED DOC ROBBIN, a 1947 attempt to revive the Our Gang/Little Rascal format. The kids spend most of the film in a spooky mansion replete with sliding panels, hidden passages, etc. When this film and another film, CURLY, utilizing many of the same child players, didn't catch on, Roach abandoned the possible series.

William Thomaier

Address withheld

Once upon a time, I was a very big Phyllis Kirk fan and, since she moved freely between TV and motion pictures (she was definitely ahead of her time), I had many, many opportunities to enjoy a Phyllis Kirk performance. Of course, I have fond memories of 1953's HOUSE OF WAX (which I've since seen two more times in magnificent 3D presentations) and my own personal favorite of Miss Kirk's films—1956's BACK FROM ETERNITY, in which she costarred with Anita Ekberg, Robert Ryan, and Rod Steiger!

Feeling nostalgic recently about her unforgettable turn as Nora Charles in THE THIN MAN, I went to the Museum of Television and Radio in New York City and found only two episodes on file (but they were two of the best)—"The Art of Murder," in which a demented quick-change artiste (Shepherd Menken) is desperate to kill Nora, the only witness to his unpunished crime, and "The Acrostic Murders," in which a murderous old lady (Mary Young) is on a personal campaign to improve the living conditions in New York.

Of course, after the demise of THE THIN MAN, I could never understand Miss Kirk's disappearance from both the TV and motion picture screens. I was always searching in vain for an answer, because I genuinely missed her. Now, 40 years later, I discover through Michael Mallory's engrossing interview with her in SS #36 that "a physical condition that impaired her walking" was the reason for



the abrupt halt to her acting career. So, Miss Kirk went into an entirely different field—public relations—and only recently retired, and is alive and well. I couldn't be happier for her and I will always love her

Raymond Banacki  
Brooklyn, NY

Being a fan of the classic horror genre, I'm a bit embarrassed to admit that I just discovered *Scarlet Street* with Issue #35. It's nice to see a publication dub itself "horror" and not see some doofus with a machete and a hockey mask disgracing the pages. My definition of horror begins with Universal and ends with Hammer, with a few movies of late being the exception—but teen slasher flicks need not apply

Tom Robinson  
Fleetsbury, MA

The article *THE AVENGERS STRIKE BACK!* sure brought on some memories of this TV series classic. When I saw the movie *THE AVENGERS*, it didn't live up to the TV series and didn't do it justice, I was disappointed. Emma Peel and John Steed were two very suave, debonair, and cool agents. Austin Powers parodies the coolness of John Steed. They don't make spy shows like they used to

Another feature I enjoyed in *Scarlet Street* #38 was *SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN*. I especially enjoyed the review on the classic *BARBARELLA*. While most remember Jane Fonda's negative role in North Viet-

nam, I will always remember her in this classic movie! Other great reviews were on *LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM*, *THE PINK PANTHER*, *RETURN TO OZ*, and, of course, *THE BIRDS*! Now, I'm so excited I will go right out there and purchase the DVDs *Scarlet Street* once again was full of insightful information!

Paul Dale Roberts, Arbitrator  
Jazma Universe Online!  
Elk Grove, CA

Well, I've finally encountered my first taste of *Scarlet Street*! Fascinating stuff, fellows. I've read pretty much all the major horror/fantasy oriented publications (from *Fangoria* to *Video Watchdog* and beyond), and I think this would get my vote as the finest of them all. The quality of writing is consistently high and there's a nice variety in the subject matter. Granted, sometimes the subject matter doesn't interest me (pretty much anything to do with super heroes, for example), but even in those instances, the spin put on it makes for good reading.

I was particularly taken with Kevin G Shinnick's interviews with Robert (Count Yorga) Quarry and William (Blacula) Marshall in Issue #19. I've seen both men interviewed before, but never so enthusiastically. The Quarry interview, in particular, is a real gem, a nice man and a damn good actor.

I was also fascinated to see Kasey Rogers interviewed in SS #38—I never made the connection between *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN* and *BEWITCHED* be-

fore! A fine interview, to be sure! And let's not forget *THE RELUCTANT HORROR HEROINE*, Phyllis Kirk. It was genuinely interesting to hear her thoughts (and Paul Picerni's) on the making of that most overrated "classic," *HOUSE OF WAX*. Don't get me wrong—they were both fine in it, but I always found the movie itself to be a bit of a drag.

Which brings me to the dueling articles on *MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM* and *HOUSE OF WAX*. Count me among the crowd who finds both to be creaky and tedious in the extreme. But the writing in both articles was above reproach, with the obvious love and passion Messrs Hanke and Valley feel for their respective favorites shining through.

In any event I'm glad to have finally had a look at *Scarlet Street*. I like what I see very much indeed!

Troy Howarth  
Johnstown, PA

**Write today to  
Scarlet Letters**

**P.O. Box 604  
Glen Rock, NJ 07452**

**or E-Mail us at  
America Online  
reditor@aol.com**



**Y**es, kids, it's the *Scarlet Street* Slightly Mangled Special. We have in our vaults some issues with minor defects: price tags glued on the covers, a folded page, a gypsy curse scrawled on the classifieds... nothing too grim, but enough to render them unsuitable for sale at the usual rate.

So, gang... now's your chance to get the *Scarlet Street* you've been missing! Just fill out the handy coupon stage left and we'll send you copies that, in the words of Ygor, are "broken, crippled, and distorted"—just a teensy bit.

## Time Running Out?

Well, don't lose your head! Just grab these specially priced copies of *Scarlet Street: The Magazine of Mystery and Horror* while you... pardon, while they last!

**Send Check or Money Order Payable to**

Scarlet Street Inc., Box 604, Dept ST, Glen Rock, NJ 07452

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

For issue contents, see pages 6 & 7.

Issue 7	Issue 15	Issue 23
Issue 8	Issue 16	Issue 24
Issue 9	Issue 17	Issue 25
Issue 10	Issue 18	Issue 26
Issue 11	Issue 19	Issue 27
Issue 12	Issue 20	Issue 28
Issue 13	Issue 21	Issue 29
Issue 14	Issue 22	Postage _____

**ONLY**

**\$3**

**EACH!**

U.S. single-issue orders please add \$2.00 for shipping and handling and \$1.50 each additional copy. Canada, \$4.00 per copy (1st class). Foreign, \$6.00 per copy (air mail). Please allow 6 to 8 weeks for delivery.

SCARLET STREET 11





# THE ALL-TIME DOUBLE-THRILL DOUBLE-BILL!



## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 28 (#DI-28)

SIB LEMONS 1957 (with 35) Calla Todd (in)  
GLYN FRONTIER UNKNOWN 1957 Ed Kramer Sally Fraser

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 29 (#DI-29)

RANKENSTEIN'S SLAYER 1957 Ashley Sally Tolu  
MISSILE TO THE MOON 1958 Richard (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 30 (#DI-30)

OUT DRACULA GREAT LOVE 197 Paul Naschy R  
VAMPIRE SIGHT ORGY 1973 Jack Taylor Rated R

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 31 (#DI-31)

21 WITCH CURSE 1957 Kirk Stryker  
COLONN N. OF THE ARCHA 1957 Mark (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 32 (#DI-32)

AKI THROPPATTA 1959 Michael Forest Sherry Carol  
BATTLE OF BLOOD ISLAND 1959 Robin Kennedy

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 34 (#DI-34)

SWAMP WOMEN 1956 Beverly Garland Marie Windsor  
GUNSLINGER 1956 (in) (in) and Beverly Garland

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 35 (#DI-35)

BATTLE OF THE WORLD 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
ATOMFACE VAMPIRE 1967 Albert (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 37 (#DI-37)

SCOTT HIDE 1960 Dennis Hopper Linda Lawson  
BATTLE BEYOND THE SUN 1961 Ted Perry Andy Stewart

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 38 (#DI-38)

INLAND OF THE GIGGLES 1963 Brad Harris Tim Keith  
FRANKENSTEIN'S CASTLE OF BREAKS 1963 (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 39 (#DI-39)

SCOTT HIDE 1960 Dennis Hopper Linda Lawson  
BATTLE BEYOND THE SUN 1961 Ted Perry Andy Stewart

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 40 (#DI-40)

HANES OF A STRANGER 1962 Paul Luskier  
TORNADO 1960 Richard Carlson John Redding

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 42 (#DI-42)

THE CRAWLING EYE 1958 Peter C. (in) (in) (in) (in)  
COSMIC MONSTERS 1958 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 43 (#DI-43)

THE MAD SCARF 1961 Basil Rathbone Gary Lockwood  
DR. BLOODY COFFIN 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 44 (#DI-44)

THE SPIDER 1950 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
SATAN 1950 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 45 (#DI-45)

THE SCHOOL CAPTAIN 1960 John Ashley Gary Vanzo  
JAIL BAIT 1960 Gary Clarke Mark Ryan Richard Corning

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 49\* (#DI-49)

HOUSE OF THE DEAD 1958 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
THE BAT 1958 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 51\* (#DI-51)

RANGERS OF THE TITANIC 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
KILL BARRY KILL 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 53\* (#DI-53)

THE LUGOSINE PENA BROOKLYN CORLEON  
BRIDE OF THE GORILLA 1951 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 55\* (#DI-55)

SWORD AND THE DRAGON 1957 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
THE DEVIL COMMANDER 1957 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)



## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 56\* (#DI-56)

BE DOORS CREEPS 1970 Peter Lushung Patrick MacNeil  
BE DOORS CREEPS 1970 Peter Lushung Patrick MacNeil

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 58\* (#DI-58)

SPIDER BABY 1964 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
MONDO BAI BAI 1964 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 59\* (#DI-59)

HIGHBRIE 2 DR. HITCHCOCK 1967 Barbara Steele  
WOLF DR. ORLOFF 1962 Howard Vernon

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 60\* (#DI-60)

THE HINDISH GHOULS 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
MAN A. Peter Lushung

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 61\* (#DI-61)

HIDEOUS SILENT DEATH 1958 Robert Lusk  
PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE 1959 (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 62\* (#DI-62)

BLACK SABBATH 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
FIRST SPACE SHIP ON VENUS 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 64\* (#DI-64)

THE SENSELESS CRUE 1961 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
THE VIOLENT YEARS 1956 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 65\* (#DI-65)

WEREWOLF IN A GIRL'S DORMITORY 1967 Carl Schell  
THE MAD EXCITATIONS 1963 Wolfgang Petersen



## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 66\* (#DI-66)

THE SADDLE 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
PSYCHOMANIA 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 70\* (#DI-70)

DR. BLOODY VS THE WEREWOLF 1971 Paul Naschy  
DIARY OF AN ABOLIC MURDERESS 1975 (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 71\* (#DI-71)

HAIR HUMAN 1958 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
MONSTER FROM GREEN HILL 1958 (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 72\* (#DI-72)

THESE PEOPLE 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
THE TELL TALE HEART 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 73\* (#DI-73)

BRAIN THAT WOULD TALK 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
TACK THE RIFTER 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 74\* (#DI-74)

THE ENBA MIER 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
THE SIB BEAST 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 75\* (#DI-75)

THE DEATH SLEEP 1951 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
VIOLET D. 1954 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 76\* (#DI-76)

THE BLOOD BROTHER 1959 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
THE BEATNICKS 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 78\* (#DI-78)

MARRIED TO YOU 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
WILD STAR 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)



## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 79\* (#DI-79)

LEAF JUNGLE GODDESS 1956 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
UNNATURAL 1957 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 80\* (#DI-80)

BEAST OF MU CAH 1956 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
SECRET OF THE TUNGIAN 1962 (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 81\* (#DI-81)

SHANTY TRAMP 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
SAVAGES FROM HELL 1963 (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 82\* (#DI-82)

INVASION 1957 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
UNKNOWN WORLD 1951 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 83\* (#DI-83)

WHAT? 1963 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
CRYPT OF HORROR 1963 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 84\* (#DI-84)

WHITE WARRIOR 1961 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
SON OF SAMSON 1961 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 85\* (#DI-85)

LIBRARY THE IVINE 1957 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
INVASION A VENGERS 1958 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 86\* (#DI-86)

THE HILL CLIMBERS 1958 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
THE HORROR 1957 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 87\* (#DI-87)

HOTHEAD 1958 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
TERRIBLE 1959 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 88\* (#DI-88)

BRIDE OF THE MONSTER 1958 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
PHANTOM FROM 10,000 FACES 1955 (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 89\* (#DI-89)

DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS 1971 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
NIGHT OF THE MURDERERS 1973 (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 90\* (#DI-90)

COMMON LAW WIFE 1963 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
FIVE MINUTES TO LOVE 1963 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 91\* (#DI-91)

THE NIGHT EATING AND OUT OF THE GRAVE 1971  
IT HAPPENED AT NIGHT MARRIAGE 1971 (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 92\* (#DI-92)

IN REBEL STRANGE CREATURES WHO STOPPED LIVING 1963  
THE THREE KILLERS 1963 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 93\* (#DI-93)

THE LOVE FACTOR 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
WHEN WOMEN HAD TALES 1970 (in) (in) (in) (in)

## WALK-IN DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 1\* (#WI-01)

THE MAD MONSTER 1961 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
THE DEATH BAT 1961 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## WALK-IN DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 3\* (#WI-03)

INVASION OF THE ANIMAL PEOPLE 1959 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
TERROR OF THE BLOOD MONSTERS 1963 (in) (in) (in) (in)

## WALK-IN DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 4\* (#WI-04)

BEYOND THE MIRROR 1951 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)  
CRASH OF THE MONS 1951 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)

## WALK-IN TRIPLE FEATURE NO. 1\* (#WI-TF1)

RIDERS OF THE WHISTLING SKEL 1960 (in) (in) (in) (in)  
GHOST PATROL 1959 (in) (in) (in) (in) (in) (in)



THIS OFFER WILL END AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT, NOV. 30, 2000.

# the NEWS



# HOUND

Join The Hound in his Summer den on the shady side of the Grimpen Mire for some cool news about hot happenings on the media scene . . .

## Indiana Jones Sees Dead People

THE SIXTH SENSE writer/director M. Night Shyamalan has been asked by Steven Spielberg to draft a screenplay for INDIANA JONES 4. Assuming Shyamalan accepts the assignment—which sounds like a no-brainer. Time will tell if Shyamalan will rewrite the present script rumored to concern the discovery of Atlantis, or Noah's Ark, or Excalibur, or the Garden of Eden, or the Dead Sea Scrolls, or maybe the Roswell UFO—or create a brand-new storyline.

Spielberg reportedly wants to start production on the fourth Indy film in 2002, barring conflicts with other projects—for instance, the Stanley Kubrick inherited sci-fi drama A.I.

## Theatrical Thrills

Coming to cinemas in August: THE HOLLOW MAN (Columbia) from director Paul Verhoeven (STARSHIP TROOPERS) stars Kevin Bacon as a high-tech invisible man; Elizabeth Shue and Josh Brolin costar . . . GOD ZILLA 2000 (TriStar) presents The Big G in all his authentic Japanese glory in a brand-new Toho extravaganza . . . Clint Eastwood, James Garner, Tommy Lee Jones, and Donald Sutherland star in the geriatric astronaut thriller SPACE COWBOYS (Warner Bros.). Also tentatively scheduled for August: Brendan Fraser is BEDAZZLED by devil-in-a-tight-dress Elizabeth Hurley in a Fox remake of the 1967 Faustian comedy/fantasy that starred Peter Cook, Dudley Moore, and (in a made-to-order role as the deadly sin Lust) Raquel Welch.

Trimark tries to tap the sizeable BLAIR WITCH audience with their "documentary" THE ST. FRANCISVILLE EXPERIMENT, arriving in September. The film supposedly documents the experiences of four psychic investigators in the haunted Lalaurie House in Louisiana. Also due in September: Morgan Freeman returns as forensic psychologist Dr. Alex Cross in ALONG CAME A SPIDER, Paramount's followup to KISS THE GIRLS. Monica Potter and Penelope Ann Miller costar in this second adaptation from novelist James Patterson's series . . . HIGHLANDER: ENDGAME (Dimension) stars Adrian Paul as his Duncan MacLeod character from the HIGHLANDER TV series, along with Christopher Lambert, who makes his fourth big-screen appearance as Connor MacLeod.

## Future Features

BLAIR WITCH 2: BOOK OF SHADOWS (Artisan) haunts movie theaters in October, starring yet another cast of unknown, doomed college students. Also in October: Winona Ryder and Ben Chaplin star in the supernatural thriller LOST SOULS, which New Line Cinema was slated to release a year ago . . . the sci-fi drama IMPOSTOR (Dimension) stars Gary Sinise in a Phillip K. Dick adaptation about an engineer who invents a devastating weapon against an alien invasion, then is suspected of being an alien himself.

In November, Arnold Schwarzenegger returns to his comfortable—and lucrative—action/sci-fi roots with THE SIXTH DAY (Columbia). Arnold is a chopper pilot (we can see the aerial chase scene already) who finds himself replaced by a

company set up at Warner Bros. MACABRE will follow a modern version of 13 GHOSTS, and may precede a remake of THE TINGLER.

Ripley's Game, the third of five Tom Ripley thrillers from the late novelist Patricia Highsmith, will become a Fine Line feature under the direction of Italian filmmaker Liliana Cavani, noted for her sleazy 1974 cult favorite THE NIGHT PORTER. German director Wim Wenders beat Cavani to the punch, though, with his 1977 version entitled AMERICAN FRIEND, which starred a homicidal Dennis Hopper as Tom Ripley. Yet another book in Highsmith's series, Ripley Under Ground, is in development at Fox Searchlight Pictures under the title MAYHEM. All the current interest in Highsmith's Ripley novels stems, of course, from the popular 1999 Paramount adaptation of The Talented Mr. Ripley, which itself was first filmed in 1960 by Rene Clement as PURPLE NOON.

## Updates Aplenty

Mark Walberg, star of THE PERFECT STORM and BOOGIE NIGHTS, has been chosen by Tim Burton to play the lead human in his new version of PLANET OF THE APES, due next Summer from Fox. He'll also star in an already-planned APES sequel. Walberg, the former rap music star and Calvin Klein underwear model, is also rumored to be considered for the title role in Universal's THE GREEN HORNET, opposite Jet Li as Kato. In other anthropological news, Gary Oldman has been tapped to play a major character while enveloped in ape regalia created by monkey master Rick Baker.

Josh Hartnett of THE FACULTY and HALLOWEEN H20 is the likely choice to portray the Vampire Lestat in QUEEN OF THE DAMNED, the upcoming Warner Bros. adaptation

of Anne Rice's novel. Hartnett steps into the role that Tom Cruise played in INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE. Mr. Cruise is obviously too big a star to do sequels these days. Oops . . . except for MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 2, of course! Advance word has it that the homoeroticism fueling Rice's Vampire Chronicles will be a no-show, which doubtless will lead to a similar situation with audiences.

And speaking of homoeroticism, Joel Schumacher has bowed out of directorial duties on the pilot episode of Showtime's upcoming TV miniseries based on Channel Four's QUEER AS FOLK. Showtime's Americanized version of the popular and



Maury Chaykin and Timothy Hutton are scheduled to return to A&E for a series of one-hour Nero Wolfe mysteries, plus one new two-hour feature.

clone and targeted for assassination. Roger Spottiswoode (TOMORROW NEVER DIES) directs. The supernatural thriller UNBREAKABLE (Touchstone) from THE SIXTH SENSE auteur M. Night Shyamalan is also scheduled for a November release, and stars Bruce Willis and Samuel L. Jackson as two accident survivors whose lives change dramatically when their paths cross. Robin Wright Penn and child actor Spencer Treat Clark costar.

## Deja Views

MACABRE, William Castle's 1958 inauguration into the gimmicky horror movie biz, will be remade by Dark Castle Entertainment, Joel Silver and Robert Zemeckis' medium budget genre production

Continued on page 16





**JOHN:** Hey, Roddy, it's John! Tab and I were just up the Amazon hunting for the Creature and it's turned poor Tab into a real basket case! We figure we're going to relax by signing onto the swell new Discussion Boards on the Scarlet Web Site. You can sign on and talk about classic Universal Horrors, Hammer Films, Sherlock Holmes, Charlie Chan, Alfred Hitchcock, Tarzan of the Apes, The Thin Man, Jack the Ripper, and just about anything else that comes to mind! Why, heck, you can even talk about sexual subtexts in old pictures . . .

**TAB:** Subtexts? I see what you mean!

Yes, it's . . .

# Scarlet Street

The Website of Mystery and Horror

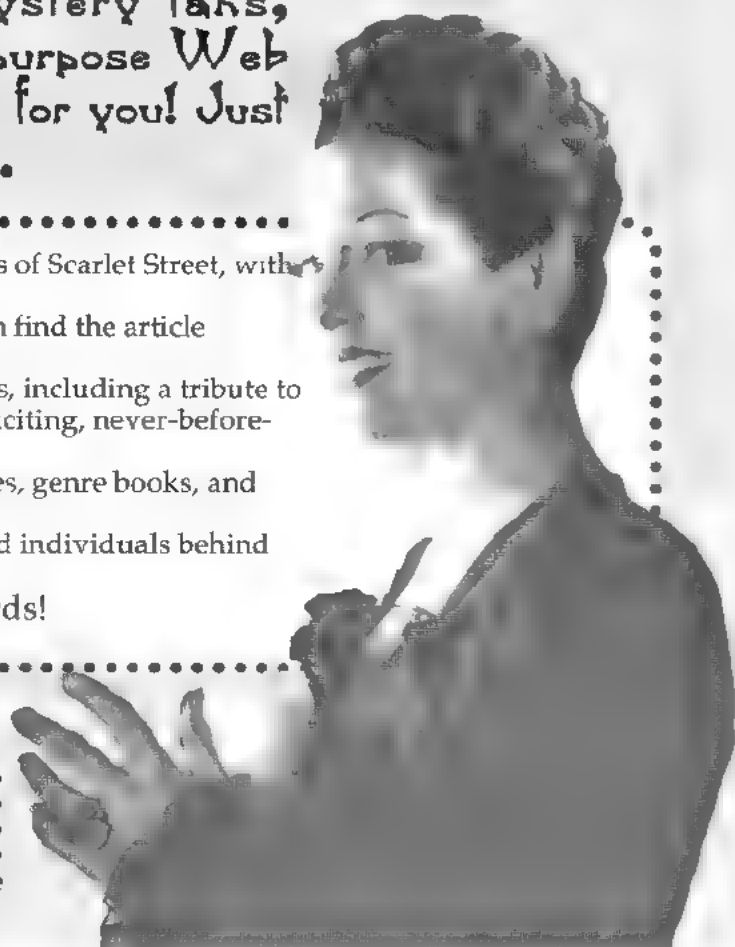
That's right, horror and mystery fans, it's the Spider Woman's all-purpose Web Site, and it's designed especially for you! Just see what you'll find online . . . .

- ★ Thrilling articles and interviews from past issues of Scarlet Street, with photographs in full, blood-drenched color!
- ★ A complete listing of back issues, so that you can find the article you've been wanting to read all these years!
- ★ A photo gallery of Scarlet Staffers and celebrities, including a tribute to Sherlock Holmes portrayer Jeremy Brett with exciting, never-before-seen photographs.
- ★ A complete Scarlet Street catalogue of videotapes, genre books, and compact discs.
- ★ A staff section, so you can get to know the crazed individuals behind your favorite articles and art work.
- ★ And our Spanking New Discussion Boards!

... so come on in, as the spider said to the fly. Don't delay! Sign on today at:

**www.scarletstreet.com**

Website designed by John E. Payne



Four of the eight movies Elvis Presley made for producer Hal B. Wallis are now available on DVD from Paramount Home Entertainment and this is good news, because among them is one of the few genuine highlights of Elvis' less-than-exciting cinematic career, the gritty, noirish *KING CREOLE* (1958). Working with a fine director, Michael Curtiz, from a dramatically well-structured screenplay by Herbert Baker and Michael Vincent Gazzo (adapting a 1952 novel by Harold Robbins, *A Stone for Danny Fisher*), Elvis gives the closest thing he would ever give to a good performance, perhaps inspired by the talents around him.

As Danny Fisher, a New Orleans bus boy whose goal it is not to toady to others as his father (Dean Jagger) does, Elvis winds up falling in with a foul

# ELVIS LIVES!

by Barry Monush

bunch of locals, starting with punk Shark (Vic Morrow), who uses Danny as a singing decoy while he and his buddies rob a five and dime. Danny meets a decent girl, Nellie (Dolores Hart), though he has already been drawn to vulnerable trollop Ronnie (Carolyn Jones), the reluctant moll of the most powerful mobster in town, Maxie Fields (Walter Matthau). Danny ultimately becomes the top attraction at the King Creole, the night spot owned by Maxie's rival, Charlie LeGrand (Paul Stewart), prompting envy from the power-hungry Fields.

All of this is well-acted and engrossingly played out in a flavorful New Orleans setting. The opening precredit sequence, splendidly photographed by Russell Harlan, showing a desolate Bourbon Street as the morning peddlers sing of their wares, gets the movie off to a terrific start, and it gets even better once Danny joins the singers with his rendition of "Crawfish." Other songs include the terrific title number, "Trouble," and "Don't Ask Me Why." Ironically, the biggest hit to come from the score, "Hard Headed Woman," is barely heard, being tossed off in the background.

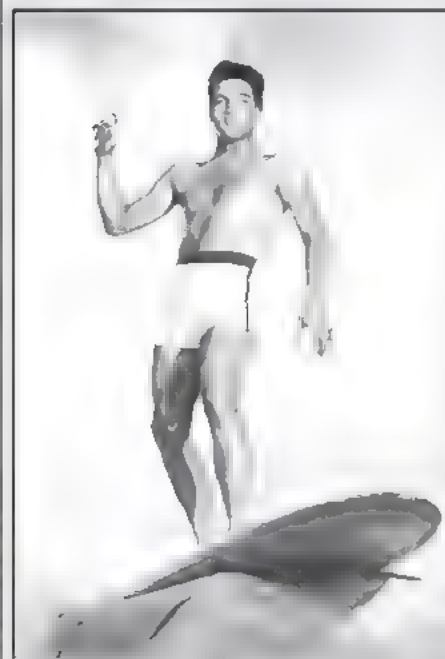
*KING CREOLE* was not only Elvis' last black-and-white offering, but the last picture he made before his famous induction into the army. When he returned to civilian life, Wallis cashed in on his post-military status with *G.I. BLUES* (1960), which pretty much set the tone for most of the subsequent Presley movies, taking a lot of the edge out of his persona. As G.I. Tulsa McLean, the King of Rock 'n' Roll sings to a puppet ("Wooden Heart") and

a crying baby ("Big Boots"), while trying to win a bet by spending an evening with icy dancer Juliet Prowse. (The same plot fueled the 1942 wartime musical *THE FLEET'S IN*, with William Holden as a betting sailor and Dorothy Lamour as an icy singer.) As directed by Norman Taurog, it's all very antiseptic and utterly forgettable.

*BLUE HAWAII* (1961) is a true Elvis milestone only in so much as its soundtrack became the biggest seller of his career, holding the number one spot on the Billboard charts for 20 weeks. The movie was pretty popular, too, though it is hard to see why. Little more than a musical travelogue of the then-new 50th state, Elvis plays Chad Gates, who, on returning to the islands after a stint in the service, decides he doesn't want to take a job in his parents' pineapple business, opting to become a tour guide instead. And that's about the extent of the plot. (This Elvis opus stems in part from the 1937 Bing Crosby musical *WAIKIKI WEDDING*, which introduced the songs "Blue Hawaii" and "Sweet Lelani," the latter winning an Oscar.)

*BLUE HAWAII* is packed with songs, including, of course, the title tune; a cover of Anthony Perkins' one chart-making single, "Moonlight Swim;" such tossed off quickies as "Ito Eats," and what is the prettiest ballad Elvis ever sang, "Can't Help Falling in Love." The supporting cast is pretty much a wash-out, with even the usually dependable

*Continued on page 77*



## NEWS HOUND

*Continued from page 14*

controversial British series will soldier on without Schumacher, whose big screen thriller *PHONE BOOTH*—about a man who answers a public telephone and becomes trapped there until the last reel—will be keeping him otherwise occupied.

## TV Screams

The Arts & Entertainment Network has signed actors Maury Chaykin and Timothy Hutton to return as Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin in a series of adaptations of Rex Stout's mysteries. Their initial two-hour telefilm, *THE GOLDEN SPIDERS*, garnered excellent ratings and reviews for the cable network. A total of 12 hours—another two-hour movie and 10 60-minute episodes—will be produced this year for a late 2000 or early 2001 series debut. The initial entry will be a feature-length adaptation of Stout's *The Doorbell Rang*, to be directed by Hutton. It's not yet known if the subsequent hour-long episodes will be based on the

Wolfian short stories or will be abridgements of the novels. (The Hound hopes for the former.)

NBC has dropped the wonderful ESP series *THE OTHERS* from its Fall 2000 schedule, along with its other Saturday Thrillology shows, *THE PRETENDER* and *PROFILER*. The Hound hopes that *THE OTHERS*—which boasted Bill Condon, Mick Garris, and Tobe Hooper among its directors, and *X-FILES* alumni Glen Morgan and James Wong as writer/producers—will return in some capacity, at least to resolve the finale's cliffhanger.

The Fox network has several horror/fantasy series debuting this fall. *DARK ANGEL* from producer James Cameron features 19-year-old actress Jessica Alba as Max, a genetically engineered woman on the run from her engineers in post-apocalyptic Seattle. *FREAKYLINKS*, coproduced by *THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT*'s Greg Hale, follows a group of cyberheads who run a website about the paranormal ([www.freakylinks.com](http://www.freakylinks.com), an actual site promoting the show). *NIGHT*

*VISIONS*, an anthology series from *X-FILES* alumni Dan Angel and Billy Brown, features two horror stories within its 60 minute time slot.

The colorful residents of San Francisco's 28 Barbary Lane will return to the small screen yet again in the Showtime miniseries *FURTHER TALES OF THE CITY*, the third adaptation of Armistead Maupin's stories. Olympia Dukakis reprises her role as Anna Madrigal, the den mother of the clan that includes Mary Ann Singleton (Laura Linney), Michael "Mouse" Tolliver (Paul Hopkins), Jon Fielding (Billy Campbell), and DeDe Halcyon Day (Barbara Garrick). The Showtime pay-cable channel has already begun production on the series, which is scheduled to debut in early 2001.

Tom Braidwood, who plays Frohike of *The Lone Gunmen* on *THE X-FILES*, reportedly makes his debut as director in an early eighth-season episode of the Fox show. Braidwood, a 23-year veteran of film production in his native Canada, may not continue as First Assistant Director on



THE X-FILES—a post he's held throughout the series—once THE LONE GUNMAN spin-off show begins production in Vancouver for its January debut. In addition to Braidwood's fellow Gunmen Bruce Harwood and Dean Haglund, the new series features newcomer Zuleikha Robinson as a slinky, gun-toting woman of mystery.

#### The Home Video Vault

Horrors! Universal Home Video resumes its Classic Monsters DVD series in late August with THE INVISIBLE MAN, THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1943), CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON, and ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN (\$29.98 each). With the sole exception of A&C MEET FRANKENSTEIN, they're also available in Universal's eight-disc CLASSIC MONSTER COLLECTION (\$199.98) along with the previous DVDs in the series: DRACULA, FRANKENSTEIN, THE MUMMY, BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, and THE WOLF MAN. Also available is a four-tape VHS collection, ABBOTT & COSTELLO MEET THE MONSTERS (\$59.98), containing their matchups with FRANKENSTEIN, THE INVISIBLE MAN, DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, and THE MUMMY.

20th Century Fox releases a six-disc set of the PLANET OF THE APES movie series on DVD in August. Included in the set are all five feature films in letterbox format, plus a bonus disc containing behind-the-scenes material. Also available in August is Universal's deluxe six-hour, double-sided DVD of TERMINATOR 2: JUDGEMENT DAY (\$39.98), which includes two different versions of the film (both with extra footage), plus production featurettes and audio commentaries by director James Cameron and star Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Coming on DVD in September, THE OMEN trilogy from Fox (all three Damien movies will be available as a set or separately), and Anchor Bay's special editions of HELLRAISER and HELLBOUND HELLRAISER II, which contain audio commentaries by Clive Barker, and will be available either individually or together in a limited edition tin box. (Just don't open it the wrong way!) Anchor Bay also has the uncut 1973 Jorge Grau gorefest LET SLEEPING CORPSES LIE (aka DON'T OPEN THE WINDOW), available on VHS and DVD in September.

Universal releases Steven Spielberg's dinosaur blockbusters JURASSIC PARK and THE LOST WORLD on DVD in October. Each disc will include a documentary featurette, production designs, and a DVD-ROM link to an upcoming live web chat with the cast and crew of JURASSIC PARK 3. (You knew it was inevitable.) Each disc retails for \$26.98, together they're available in a slipcase for \$53.98 or in a deluxe boxed set with the CD soundtracks for \$119.98.

October DVD releases from Warner Home Video include two buzz-worthy double features: THE FLY and RETURN OF THE FLY, and the 1986 remake of THE FLY paired with THE FLY II. Also in October, Paramount is scheduled to be-

gin releasing episodes of STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION on DVD, and Fox will have a special edition disc of THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW ready for Halloween.

Fans of THE X-FILES will be able to add the entire second season of the show to their DVD collection when Fox releases their next multi-disc set in November. Fox also plans to release similar full season DVD sets of BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER starting next year.

DVD releases in 2001 include E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL and the BACK TO THE FUTURE trilogy from Universal, and a special restored edition of THE WICKER MAN from Anchor Bay, reconstructed from sources around the globe to create the longest version of the 1972 mystery-horror classic yet available.

#### The News Hound's Maulbag

Randy Dannenfelser of Stillwater, New Jersey wrote The Hound asking about the correct pronunciation of actor Ernest Thesiger's name, after hearing it spoken several different ways during the audio commentary on Kino's DVD of THE OLD DARK HOUSE. No less an authority than Boris Karloff pronounced it "Thess-a-ger" on the Forry Ackerman-scripted Decca/Brunswick record AN EVENING WITH BORIS KARLOFF AND HIS FRIENDS.

#### Fearsome Folsam

Bernard Herrmann's score to MARNIE, his final official collaboration with Alfred Hitchcock, has been recorded by Varese Sarabande and is available this August as the latest in their Herrmann/Hitchcock series. Once again, as in their previous recordings of VERTIGO, PSYCHO, and THE TROUBLE WITH HARRY, Joel McNeely conducts the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.


Interest is growing on Broadway about an unproduced Noel Coward play entitled VOLCANO that drama critics say depicts the amorous affairs of James Bond creator Ian Fleming. Coward's neighbor in Jamaica. Bisexuality and wife-swapping activities are exhibited by the play's protagonist, who is incidentally not named Ian Fleming.

Gone, but never to be forgotten: Starlog editor David Hutchinson; author Denis Gifford, artist Dick Sprang, big band leader Tex Beneke; Looney Tunes composer Arthur Davis; dancer Harold Nicholas of the Nicholas Brothers; writer/director/actor Paul Bartel, screenwriter Samuel Taylor; directors Lewis Allen, Edward Bernds and Sidney Hayers; and actors Nicholas Clay, Ronny Coutteure, Marceline Day, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Vittorio Gassman, Sir John Gielgud, David Tomlinson, Francis Lederer, Nancy Marchand, Walter Matthau, Logan Ramsey, Steve Reeves, Craig Stevens, Loretta Young, and beloved Hammer Horror star Michael Ripper.

Send The Hound your questions, comments and compliments via e-mail to TheNewsHound@yahoo.com.



電  
影  
日  
記



THE DEFINITIVE  
CRITICAL HISTORY

## Charlie Chan at the Movies

*History,  
Filmography,  
and Criticism*

Ken Hanko

All you could possibly know about Charlie Chan.

The history of this popular culture icon  
unravels up well under the careful scrutiny of  
Hanko's critical eye.

THE DEFINITIVE REFERENCE WORK

## The Charlie Chan Film Encyclopedia

Howard M. Berlin

Massive, fact-filled, and entertaining.

McFarland

Box 611 • Jefferson, NC 28640

Phone 800-253-2187 www.mcfarlandpub.com

# SCREEN...



## and Screen AGAIN!

### Scarlet Street's DVD and Laser Review

#### THE GIANT BEHEMOTH

Warner Brothers  
Two Sides CLV/CAV  
Laserdisc, \$29.95

Several years following his successful Ray Bradbury-inspired *THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS* (1953), director/writer Eugene Lourie unleashed another giant reptilian threat in the 1959 classic *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH*. During this time, radioactive monster films were seeping out of every crevice in Hollywood. Many of them lacked true grace, charm, and even decent acting talent. *BEHEMOTH*, however, stands out among these films not only for its performances, but also for its tightly-constructed script. All this, despite its ridiculous, redundant title!

Gene Evans and Andre Morell team up to investigate some very mysterious happenings around the waters of London. Reports of a huge sea monster giving off large amounts of radiation are becoming common. Turns out that mankind has in-

deed tampered with Mother Nature once too often, and she has responded in kind by giving back a creature from an ancient epoch. It's up to Evans and Morell to help mobilize forces to stop the creature before it destroys London and muddies up the Thames. Evans and Morell both turn in splendid, sincere performances (along with a pre-*EXORCIST* Jack MacGowran, in a wonderful, small role as an eccentric museum paleontologist). Eugene Lourie's script is briskly paced, packing the 80 minutes of the film's running time with action almost from the opening frame.

The Warner Bros. laserdisc is such a welcome relief from the ratty-looking prints that have been popping up on television in the last few years. No more scratchy negatives or wobbly soundtrack music (as was the case with the print shown on American Movie Classics). The laser has also restored the ferry sequence missing from the video release. The print looks crystal clear and sharp,

with the grays and blacks contrasting nicely. The sound has been dramatically improved, allowing the dialogue and the terrific score by Edwin Astley to shine through untarnished. The movie is presented in a matted 1.78:1 aspect ratio, which serves some of the more dialogue-driven scenes pretty well, but looks

a bit tight in some of the effects sequences. Side Two of the disc is presented in CAV, allowing freeze-frame analysis of the great special effects by Willis O'Brien and Pete Petersen.

—Brooke Perry

#### THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD

Columbia TriStar

DVD, \$27.95

Moviegoers in 1958 were in for a special treat when they bought their tickets to the fantasy adventure *THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD*. Not only were they in for effects master Ray Harryhausen's first full-blown adventure into mythic fantasy—he had previously dazzled audiences with *THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS* (1953), *IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA* (1955), and *EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS* (1956)—but they were to witness his unique brand of magic in full color.

This adventure has Captain Sinbad (Kerwin Mathews) racing to cure his beloved Princess Parisa (Kathryn Grant) from the spell of the evil magician Sokurah (Torin Thatcher). Traveling to the Island of Colossus, Sinbad and his men fight many classic Harryhausen creatures, including the fantastic Cyclops, a dragon, a roc, and the first of what would become a Harryhausen staple, the sword-wielding skeleton. Add to this a great Bernard Herrmann score, and it's one of the premier fantasy films of all time.

Columbia TriStar has released a stellar DVD of this title, presented in a beautifully balanced 1.85 ratio. Although the film has not been restored (the colors in several sections retain their aged and faded hues, and several sections show more film grain than they should), it's the best it has ever looked on any video format. The strong mono soundtrack is clean and is presented in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. The film is also available with a very generous choice of six subtitle options: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Thai, Chinese, and Korean.

A great version of a great film is only the tip of the iceberg on this Ray Harryhausen Signature Collection DVD. In the special features section, you'll find not one, but four documentaries. Easily the best of these is Richard Schickel's *RAY HARRYHAUSEN CHRONICLES*. This Leonard Nimoy narrated film features tons of rarely seen Harryhausen experimental footage and sketches, not to mention incredible closeups of the original models of most of his classic creations. Interviews and reminiscences with good friend Ray Bradbury, partner Charles Schnee, and filmmaker fans Dennis Muren, Henry Selik, and George Lucas just add to the enjoyment of this must-have documentary.

The other documentaries include the original 1958 demonstration film, *THIS IS DYNAMATION*. Presented in 1.85 from a very good source print, this is a fascinating document showing how the film was promoted and is surprising in that many of the special effects are explained. Two





interviews fill out the documentaries: A LOOK BEHIND THE VOYAGE (1995) covers a lot of ground that the RAY HARRYHAUSEN CHRONICLES did, but seeing Kerwin Mathews and Schneer talk about the making of the film, not to men-



tion the shots of Harryhausen standing in front of shelves of his models, make this a must. And the oddly placed JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS has an infectiously giddy and excited John Landis interview. ing Harryhausen

Columbia TriStar has included a bounty of trailers. A puzzling "poster section" features a solitary image of what looks like the British Quad poster. The "talent files" feature extremely brief bios and selected filmographies of Harryhausen, director Nathan Juran, and the three leads. The menus on this disc are silent and nonanimated, but beautiful and easy to navigate. This is a must-have for any fan of the genre

—Jeff Allen

#### GLEN OR GLENDA?

#### JAIL BAIT

#### BRIDE OF THE MONSTER

#### PLAN NINE FROM OUTER SPACE

Image Entertainment

DVD, \$24.99 each

The coming of the home video digital revolution has allowed the works of the greatest directors from around the world to be seen in a quality unsurpassed in the history of film. This age of High Definition letterboxed, anamorphic picture, AC-3, DTS, Dolby Digital Surround Sound has added new depth and clarity to even the most watched, read, and studied films ever made. Finally, the works of one of the most written about, talked about, studied, and criticized directors of the past decade can be seen in the most complete and pristine state ever. Yes, after years of innumerable VHS copies from a thousand different public domain companies, the legacy of Edward D. Wood Jr. comes to DVD. We all have copies of our favorites. We know and quote all the best dialogue, but the bottom line is how do the Wade Williams Collection DVDs rank?

Let's start with a quick overview of the presentation of these four titles. They all sport very attractive, colorful snap-case packaging with the briefest of plot summaries by Wade Williams on the back. There are no actual liner notes for any title. The inside of each case simply lists

the chapter titles over a background collage. (JAIL BAIT is the only one to feature actual stills.) Three of the discs are a uniform silver with title and copyright information. (PLAN NINE features full color.) The films are presented in their original 1:33 aspect ratio with mono sound and include the trailer to that disc's film.

GLEN OR GLENDA (1953), Ed's semi-autobiographical opus, is the earliest title in the collection. The main menu features a silent loop of the sensationalistic titles from the film's trailer. The film itself, unfortunately, is easily the worst of the lot. The opening titles use the freeze frame technique that Wade Williams seems to like. The print itself is a very scratched copy with numerous missing frames, some very bad splices, and even some incomplete and missing dialogue! Better prints of this title are widely available, and this makes one wonder why a stronger source print wasn't used. The only supplement is an enjoyable trailer. While the quality of the print is almost worse than the film, it's interesting to note that it contains an alternate take of the famous scene in which Do.ores Fuller passes Ed her angora sweater

JAIL BAIT (1954), while three minutes longer than GLEN OR GLENDA, has only 11 chapters. It is also the only title in the collection minus a real main menu (The only one available is the scene selection menu, which is spread out over multiple screens.) Comparing this DVD to the Rhino Director's Cut videotape reveals quite a few interesting differences. The DVD features a fine print with truer blacks, better clarity, and more picture information on the top and right side. (On the Rhino tape, after Vic Brady kills the security guard, his entire face is obscured as he looks screen right. The DVD corrects this.) The sound is quieter, but not muffled or distorted. The DVD features the original opening credits of the police car driving through the streets, while the VHS has the freeze frame credits.

One of the best features of this DVD is the inclusion of the original vaudeville act at the theater in the first third of the film. A shot of the theater's poster board announces "5 Big Vaudeville Acts featuring Minstrel Days with Cotton Watts and Chick." We then see a very politically incorrect (and not particularly good) comedy sketch, followed by some hoofing by Cotton Watts. The VHS features a striptease that was supposedly "discovered when the long-lost negative was unearthed." This "long-lost" footage begins with a video box (!) proclaiming "Follies Theatre Los Angeles" superimposed over a city scene, and then features a poor quality (the picture, that is, the act itself is a hoot) clip of a fifties-era stripper. Interestingly, the soundtrack for the stripper is the original soundtrack of Cotton Watts' dance routine!

BRIDE OF THE MONSTER (1956) features a superb silent and static shot of Lugos, behind the main menu and has 12 chapter stops. A horribly-framed trailer is featured. The left side is badly cropped,

cutting into titles, and the final shot features a Wade Williams copyright. Compared to the print of the Star Classics video release of many years ago, the DVD is sharper, offers more information on the top and left (although there seems to be too much head room in many shots), and has vastly superior sound. However, the DVD is extremely dark—so dark, in fact, that many background objects clearly visible on the VHS are completely indiscernible on the DVD. Finally, the end title on the DVD reads "Bride of the Monster. The End. Copyright 1956 Filmmakers Releasing Organization" over a plain black background, while the VHS has the familiar "The End. Made in Hollywood USA" over the mushroom cloud that actually concludes the picture.

Easily the best of this lot is PLAN NINE FROM OUTER SPACE (1959). The main menu sports animation of a flying saucer with music accompaniment. The film itself seems to be the exact print that The Nostalgia Merchant released 15 years ago. The DVD has slightly more information on the top and right side, but other than the better detail on DVD, the picture is identical to the VHS. In addition to a de-



cent trailer, the PLAN NINE DVD also features an additional supplement that is alone worth the price of the disc.

Mark Patrick Carducci's incredible documentary FLYING SAUCERS OVER HOLLYWOOD: THE PLAN 9 COMPANION (1992) is a loving tribute to Ed Wood, his company, and in particular the making of PLAN NINE. The sheer enthusiasm and obvious love of the subject comes through every frame of this intensely researched film. Trips to Ed Wood's old haunts (including the studio where PLAN NINE was shot), warm tributes to Tor Johnson, Criswell, and Lugosi, enthusiastic interviews with Vampira, Conrad Brooks, Paul Marco, Gregory Walcott, and Carl Anthony, and input from fans Forry Ackerman, Sam Raimi, and (for reasons unknown) Brad Lineweaver put this up with the best of the behind-the-scenes documentaries available.

—Jeff Allen

## PSYCHO

Universal Home Video  
DVD, \$24.49

Director Gus Van Sant's color-by-numbers copy of PSYCHO does Hitchcock's 1960 original a disservice by turning it largely into a curiosity. The moments of interest that do remain hold a fascination of the kind that keeps motorists staring at roadside car crashes.

The dialogue by returning scenarist Joseph Stefano is left surprisingly intact. Another surprise is that Van Sant didn't take the opportunity to "gore up" his PSYCHO. The two murder scenes are copied nearly edit-for-edit, the color photography adding red-tinged blood but no extra impact. And the addition of some partial nudity has negligible impact.

This illustrates the main fault of the new PSYCHO: Beyond the curiosity factor of seeing it filmed in color and performed by new actors, nothing of real interest has been added. It has no reason for being, other than as an indulgent exercise. What has been added beyond color is an absurdity created by some odd casting and performance choices. Viggo Mortensen as Marion's boyfriend Sam is suffi-



ciently hunky to make Marion's theft of \$400,000 seem believably carnal in its motivation, but his lackadaisical attitude toward Marion's disappearance, and his subsequent come-ons to Marion's sister Lila, are nonsensical. As Lila, the curvaceous Julianne Moore is so physically unlike Marion (as portrayed by the wiry Anne Heche) that the contrast is distracting and ridiculous. Rather than acting like a concerned sibling, Lila comes across as brusque and vaguely pissed off. Both Sam and Lila seem casual and almost apathetic in their ensuing search for Marion.

Heche, the brightest aspect of the new PSYCHO, manages to make Marion's familiar dialogue seem fresh and spontaneous. It's a great shame, and a disservice to Heche's performance, that the shower murder is so sluggishly reconstructed.

Vince Vaughn makes a creditable attempt at giving the character of Norman Bates a unique spin. He adds his own quirks—the main one being an annoying nervous chuckle—and is occasionally quite creepy. But Vaughn's Norman is a crude ignoramus in comparison to Anthony Perkins' keen intelligence and brittle, birdlike physicality. Vaughn oddly enacts Norman's cleanup after Marion's murder as nearly emotionless. Is he in shock? Or has he simply done this chore too many times before? That interpretation can at least be assumed by Norman's apparently oft-used peephole into Cabin Number One. Then again, it could be just another senseless revision.

And speaking of that peephole...

Probably the most embarrassing addition to this PSYCHO is Norman's self-gratifying activity while peering in at his blonde guest. (Given the workmanlike cleanup job he performs after Marion's murder, his lack of care—and Kleenex—is surprising here.) Admittedly there is logic to this: "Mother" murderously punishes Norman's sexual activity just as Norman did hers. Nevertheless, this distracting addition remains in the "more information than we needed" category.

Viewers gameily avoiding the eject button will find that the rest of the cast is generally competent. William H. Macy is fine as the defective Arbogast, but does some over-the-top grimacing during the awkward recreation of the staircase murder. Amid the slashing, director Van Sant adds some non-sequitur flash-cuts of a semi-nude woman and a cow standing in a road. Symbolic? Disturbingly surreal? Try silly.

PSYCHO '98 is more of an elaborate stunt than a feature film. It will leave a bad taste in the mouth of Hitchcock fans, and will probably leave newcomers dissatisfied, confused, or bored... or all three. The biggest tragedy is that it may actually discourage new audiences from exploring bona fide Hitchcock.

—John J. Mathews

## THEY SHOOT HORSES, DON'T THEY?

Anchor Bay  
DVD, \$24.98

Released in 1969 during an era of protest, THEY SHOOT HORSES, DON'T THEY? casts a jaundiced eye on the Depression-era dance marathon craze and exposes the maggots underneath of the American dream. James Poe and Robert E. Thompson's script retains the central metaphor of Horace McCoy's 1935 novel, while deepening the book's implicit dimension of existential horror.

In his breakthrough film, director Sydney Pollack deploys a roaming POV that sweeps the viewer about the dance floor, drifting from couple to couple, eavesdropping on each. HORSES abounds with indelible character parts. Jane Fonda as the nihilistic, acid-tongued Gloria, Michael Sarrazin as Gloria's dance partner, a wide-eyed innocent who succumbs to Gloria's lethal pessimism; platinum blonde Susannah York as the would-be

starlet Alice LeBlanc, the film's Ophelia, Al (Grampa Munster) Lewis as the taciturn Turkey, Red Buttons as the feisty—yet doomed—Sailor.

In the Oscar-winning role of Rocky, the dance marathon MC, Gig Young embodies evil at its most banal. Spouting patriotic, feel-good homilies, he eggs the dancers beyond the limits of human en-



durance. An unctuous impresario of misery, Rocky incarnates the glad-handing cruelty of a society based on competition. "Tough rules, folks," Rocky heartlessly intones, "but these are tough times."

Shot in a full-size replica of Santa Monica's Aragon ballroom, HORSES generates a remarkable period atmosphere. The film captures an age of failure, when audiences would gather to marvel at human beings lower on the food chain than themselves. (The dance marathon eventually proved a practice so barbaric it was banned by law.)

Filmed in Panavision, HORSES is presented in widescreen enhanced 2.35:1 on one side of this double-sided disc, and in cramped 1.33:1 transfer on the other. While the widescreen version displays fine detail and accurate color, the pan-and-scan transfer looks washed out. Both sides exhibit severe motion artifacts, a major deficit in a film in which the cast is constantly on the move. Neither subtitles or closed captions are included. A release trailer and six-minute making-of-short round out the program.

One of the most powerful American motion pictures of its era, THEY SHOOT HORSES, DON'T THEY? is a total work of art, integrating razor-sharp dialogue, historically accurate art direction, pointedly ironic use of period music, and consummate performances in an unflinching study of the human condition.

—Michael Draine

## THE THIRD MAN

The Criterion Collection  
DVD, \$39.95

Orson Welles enjoyed calling his brief, indelible screen role as Harry Lime "a real



star part." "What matters in that kind of role is not how many lines you have, but how few," Welles told his close friend and directorial disciple, Peter Bogdanovich. "What counts is how much the other characters talk about you. Such a star vehicle really is a vehicle. All you have to do is ride." Appropriately, Welles torchbearer Bogdanovich introduces the Criterion Collection's pristine new 50th-anniversary edition of the black-and-white masterpiece **THE THIRD MAN**.

With less than 10 minutes of actual screen time, Welles' portrayal of Lime—a charming, coldhearted American black marketeer in post-World War II Vienna—so dominates **THE THIRD MAN** that some fans persist in believing that Welles directed the film, or at least part of it. Instead, **THE THIRD MAN** was directed with depth and artistry by British filmmaker Carol Reed (1947's **ODD MAN OUT**). The script was penned by illustrious British novelist Graham Greene (1940's *The Power and the Glory*), although Welles did write Lime's gleefully amoral "cuckoo-clock" speech.

Released in Britain in 1949 (stateside in 1950), **THE THIRD MAN** also bears the unmistakable influence of its British producer, Alexander Korda (1940's **THE THIEF OF BAGDAD**), and his American counterpart, David O. Selznick (1939's **GONE WITH THE WIND**). This rare, remarkable convergence of superior (and strong-willed) screen talents resulted in what Bogdanovich calls the finest "non-auteur" film of all time. Like **CASABLANCA** (1942), he argues, **THE THIRD MAN** seems to be one of those extraordinary "happy accidents" of classic moviemaking. "But when you see **THE THIRD MAN**, it doesn't seem accidental," Bogdanovich notes. "Everybody, I think, knew what they were doing."

**THE THIRD MAN** begins as penniless American pulp writer Holly Martins (Joseph Cotten, in a sensitive, subtly layered performance) arrives in Vienna to accept a job from old pal Harry Lime. Lime, Martins is told, has been killed in a car accident. Disheartening Martins even more, a military policeman (Trevor Howard) informs him that Lime actually was a heartless murderer who sold watered-down penicillin to crowded Vienna hospitals.

The shattered Martins vows to clear his best friend's name—a decision that leads to a shocking and painful discovery and a suspenseful climax in the dark, menacing sewers beneath the war-torn ruins of Vienna.

Set to the strange, hypnotic sounds of Anton Karas' zither, **THE THIRD MAN** is a bleak, disturbing, and dramatically complex exploration of love, friendship, loyalty, and betrayal. The Criterion DVD includes an immaculate digital transfer of the film, plus such appetizing extras as theatrical trailers, an abridged recording of Greene's original treatment (read by actor Richard Clarke), comparisons between the United States and British release versions, a demonstration of the film's restoration, archival footage of



Karas and the sewer locations, plus two related radio shows—the 1951 **LUX RADIO THEATER** adaptation of the film (with Cotten reprising his role) and the 1951 "A Ticket to Tangiers" episode of **THE LIVES OF HARRY LIME** (written by and starring Welles).

Restoring this classic to first-class condition for the first time in years, Criterion's superb **THIRD MAN** belongs in every movie buff's collection.

—Terry Pace

#### **RASPUTIN THE MAD MONK**

Anchor Bay  
DVD, \$29.98

This is Hammer's first major attempt at melding historical epic and horror melodrama. It concerns the real-life charlatan Grigori Yefimovitch Rasputin and his hypnotic control over Tzarist Russia.

Rasputin (Christopher Lee) has the power to heal the sick. After being dismissed from a monastery, he heads off to St. Petersburg, where he orchestrates an accident involving little Alexis (Robert Duncan), the son of the Tzarina (Renee Asherson). When one of the Tzarina's ladies-in-waiting (Barbara Shelley) suggests Rasputin might be able to heal the boy, the first lady of Russia sends for him. Before long, she dismisses her personal attendants and places the unholy holy man over Russia's medical community. Rasputin appoints his friend and confidant, Dr. Zargo (Richard Pasco), as his second-in-command and goes about using his power to bed as many women as possible. (And he doesn't even bathe or brush his teeth!) The prissy Ivan (Francis Matthews) and Zargo then plot the mad Russian's assassination.

Viewed as historical epic, **RASPUTIN THE MAD MONK**, being neither historical nor epic, fails. All but a few characters are entirely fictional, and various story elements were changed for fear of a lawsuit brought by those involved. Sadly, even the conclusion involving Rasputin's death is so watered down that it's hardly a take on the actual event. Production be-

gan on June 7, 1965 and concluded a little over a month later, on July 20. It was shot using cast, crew, and standing sets from Hammer's previous production, **DRACULA—PRINCE OF DARKNESS**, destroying the epic quality that might otherwise have benefited the film. In addition, the use of stock footage to portray Russian society detracts from the film rather than enhancing it.

Despite these flaws, **RASPUTIN** has some good things going for it. Christopher Lee gives what may be the best performance of his career. He is a domineering and frightening figure, his pale, dirty face protruding from greasy, matted hair. So good is Lee in the role that Rasputin seems to be brought to life before the viewer's eyes. But Lee isn't the only actor to provide a remarkable performance. Barbara Shelley offers a passionate take on lady-in-waiting Sonia, whose obsession for Rasputin sends her on a suicidal course.

As a horror film, the movie works. While Don Sharp's direction isn't as frame-oriented as Terence Fisher's nor as seductive as Peter Sasdy's, he keeps the film at an even pace. Perhaps the film works best as an homage to the classic thirties films that seem to have inspired it: **SVENGALI** (1931) and **RASPUTIN AND THE EMPRESS** (1932).

**RASPUTIN** is presented in letterboxed format at a 2.10:1 aspect ratio. Contained on the disc is the theatrical trailer and two TV spots. Also included is an episode of **THE WORLD OF HAMMER** entitled "Christopher Lee," which was previously released on video by Anchor Bay as a promotional freebie. The audio commentary sports Lee, Shelley, Matthews, and Suzan Farmer, though it's Lee who dominates. Farmer provides some of the most interesting highlights. Unfortunately, she's hard to hear and gets the least attention.

—Chris Workman



#### **INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN, THE AMAZING TRANSPARENT MAN** The Roan Group DVD, \$29.95

Intrigued by the world's first destruction via A-bomb, as well as a growing interest in unidentified flying objects, cinema became increasingly science-oriented in the late forties. By 1950, the horror genre had been all but displaced by science fiction. In the late fifties, this trend began to reverse itself, so that rational science gave way once again to horror. In the mid-fifties, Hammer precipitated this move by

producing a crossover, *THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT* (1955), and then following it up with the more horror-tinged *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1957). It wasn't long before other companies jumped on the bandwagon. As part of their Horror Classics 2 presentation, the Roan Group has released two of these crossover films on DVD.

The first, *INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN* (1956), stars an alcoholic Lon Chaney Jr. as Butcher Benton, a killer sentenced to die in the electric chair. Before he does so, he vows revenge on the criminals who sold him out in order to escape prosecution themselves. Following the formula laid down by Columbia in the late thirties/early forties—a mad doctor (Robert Shayne) procures the con's body and goes about resurrecting him—inadvertently making Butcher Benton stronger than ever and an unstoppable killing machine.

The fact that the print is bad only further calls attention to the fact that the movie itself is bad. An attempt was made



to not only make *INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN* a sci-fi/horror piece (with precious little of either), but to have it come across as a documentary as well, complete with voiceover narration. Nevertheless, there's pretty much nothing to recommend the film: Chaney's performance is no better or worse than many of the performances he gave in classic Universal horror and mystery features a decade earlier.

*THE AMAZING TRANSPARENT MAN*, on the other hand, is much better. Usually slighted due to its low budget and minimal special effects, it boasts some stylish direction from German-born Edgar G. Ulmer. Ulmer was responsible for numerous grade B and Z films throughout the thirties, forties, and fifties. These include Universal's *THE BLACK CAT* (1934), PRC's best film, *BLUEBEARD* (1944); and the thought-provoking *THE MAN FROM PLANET X* (1951). In *THE AMAZING TRANSPARENT MAN*, a safecracker (Douglas Kennedy) escapes prison with the assistance of a beautiful woman (Marguerite Chapman). He soon learns why. She and a pal (James Griffith) are blackmailing a scientist (Ivan Triesault) who has learned of a way to render objects invisible. It isn't long before they're all robbing banks and planning world domination. Owing much to Universal's *THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS* (1940), directed by fellow German Joe

May and starring Vincent Price, Ulmer's picture was a combination of sci-fi and horror motifs. As with most of his pictures, it has a scant running time—under an hour—and moves quickly to its climax. Presented in the widescreen format with a 16:9 transfer, the film was struck from a better-than-usual print for an older independent film.

—Chris Workman

## THE THIEF OF BAGDAD

Image Entertainment

DVD, \$29.99

*THE THIEF OF BAGDAD* (1924) endures as one of the jewels of the cinema. Producer Douglas Fairbanks Sr. assembled an exemplary crew of artisans to create his Arabian Nights-styled classic. Director Raoul Walsh, art director William Cameron Menzies, and cinematographer Arthur Edson (who would later photograph several James Whale works, beginning with 1931's *FRANKENSTEIN*) breathed life into a phantasmagorical array of set pieces and monsters. Their collaboration yielded a great fantasy/adventure, quite unlike the more psychological motivations of an earlier genre masterpiece, Robert Wiene's *THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI* (1919).

Fairbanks wisely cast himself in the titular role of Ahmed, an archetypal character who survives on the fringes of society by employing wits and guile. He's truly the master of all he surveys—no mean feat given Menzies' mammoth renderings of Bagdad's cityscapes. Despite the gargantuan sets, there's nary a wall that Ahmed cannot scale, nor a balcony so remote that it hovers beyond his grasp. Fairbanks enacts the exuberant thief with the precision of a dancer, gliding effortlessly from one scene to another.

The film's first section establishes the background plot, as the Princess of Bagdad (Julanne Johnston) begins receiving suitors. It's a matter of course that the men are equally lustful for the city's riches, but the Mongol King, Cham Shang (Sojin), harbors a hidden agenda of capturing the kingdom by force if he isn't the one chosen. Actually, the Princess has no intention of picking him, having secretly met Ahmed and fallen in love with him. The thief's expulsion from the city forces her to concoct the delaying tactic of requiring her suitors to spend seven months in search of the world's greatest treasures. The hopefuls consent to the royal challenge, although Cham Shang hedges his bet by commanding his subordinate to build a Mongol army within the walls of Bagdad while he's away.

Ahmed has truly fallen for the Princess as well, now desiring to live for more than just himself. The intervention of a divine spirit guide enables him to participate in the odyssey while seeking his own true path to happiness. That idyllic-sounding journey couldn't be rockier, however, as numerous trials and creatures await him. Ahmed soldiers on, traveling overland into a valley of fire, under

water to battle a gigantic spider, and through the sky astride a winged horse.

Not surprisingly, the Princess cannot bring herself to choose between the gifts provided by her returning aspirants. Her studied hesitation launches the assault of the Mongol warriors. In the nick of time, Ahmed arrives and magically creates an army vast enough to humble the usurpers. The Caliph (Brandon Hurst) willingly allows his daughter to wed the once-lowly thief. Together, the lovers take a few well-earned victory laps through Bagdad on a flying carpet before soaring off into the heavens.

*THE THIEF OF BAGDAD* offers a rich visual tapestry of expressionistic sets and jaw-dropping special effects. It is a production truly infused with a "sense of wonder," a towering landmark in the evolution of the cinema as an art form. It was remade three times, in 1940, 1961, and 1978, but whether it was ever bettered remains a matter of conjecture. Each subsequent version has its adherents. I tend to regard the 1961 Steve Reeves edition as being the most faithful of the remakes, while conceding the superior artistry of the 1940 Alexander Korda production. The 1924 Fairbanks production is a staggering achievement of budget and imagination, regardless of which version of the story one prefers.

Image's DVD presentation is probably the best available showcase for David Shepard's restoration of the 1924 epic. Due to the age of the materials, a certain amount of visual flaws must be expected, yet the film is in remarkably good condition for most of its running time. The image is clearly focused, with the projection



speed adjusted to prevent jerky jerky movements. It is displayed full-frame, exhibiting the depth of Menzies' awesome set designs. The print is sharp enough to reveal smaller details, such as Ahmed's white tattoo on his right arm. The audio tracks provide Gaylord Carter's 1975 musical accompaniment. His score, a kind of "romantica misteriosa" piece performed on Wurlitzer organ, further inflames the senses as the intoxicating picture unspools. The disc contains no other supplements, but should be a welcome addition to any authoritative film collection.

—John F. Black



## A ROOM WITH A VIEW

Image Entertainment  
DVD, \$24.99

Never seen *A ROOM WITH A VIEW* (1986)? Too stodgy? Too steeped in that dreaded word "class?" Those who automatically shun this Merchant Ivory production are missing one of the screen's most delightful comedy of manners.

Following a series of small successes with film versions of Henry James novels (1979's *THE EUROPEANS* and 1984's *THE BOSTONIANS*), producer Ismail Merchant and director James Ivory, joined by frequent collaborator Ruth Praver Jhabvala, turned to lighter fare: E. M. Forster's charming *A Room With a View*, written in 1908. The result: Merchant Ivory not only had a major hit (winning four Oscars, including one for Jhabvala's screenplay, and the British Academy Award for Best Film), but, thanks to Forster's sexuality, brought to the forefront of their films a refreshingly natural homoeroticism.

There are no gay characters in *A ROOM WITH A VIEW*—at least, none who are openly so—but the film's most famous scene, an all-male full frontal nude swimming scene featuring Julian Sands, Simon Callow, and Rupert Graves, quickly achieved legendary status, propelling its actors to varying degrees of fame—Callow as a highly respected actor, director, and author; Graves as star of further literary adaptations (including 1988's *A HANDFUL OF DUST*, based on the Evelyn Waugh novel, and 1991's *WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD*, again based on Forster), and Sands as star of increasingly overwrought horrors (1986's *GOTHIC*) relieved by the occasional high-tone production. Following *ROOM*, Merchant Ivory decided gayness was ready for its closeup, and provided it with a moving adaptation of Forster's *Maurice* (1971), a novel suppressed by the author during his lifetime. Graves again starred and cavorted nude, joined this time by James Wilby.

The plot of *A ROOM WITH A VIEW* is simplicity itself—on a trip to Florence, a proper young Englishwoman (Helena Bonham Carter) falls for a "totally inappropriate" young man (Sands) who, back home, moves into her neighborhood—but from minor contrivances classic comedy is often launched. Lending Sands, Carter, Callow, and Graves support is a veritable who's whom of British actors, chief among them Maggie Smith, Denholm Elliott, Daniel Day-Lewis, and Judi Dench.

Image Entertainment's DVD features no extras beyond a scene menu and choice of language, but the picture is presented in its 1.85:1 theatrical aspect ratio and is crisp and colorful. It's a shame that Merchant Ivory has never turned its attention to the classics of horror: Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), or Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), perhaps.

Too genteel for such blood and thunder terrors? Not a bit of it, and there's proof: early in *A ROOM WITH A VIEW* is a fight scene, suddenly violent and bloody and tragically fatal, that in its emotional impact bodes well for a horror film with—well, with class.

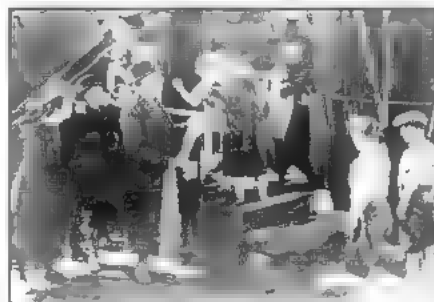
—Richard Valley

## SPARROWS

Image Entertainment  
DVD, \$29.99

Mary Pickford was America's Sweetheart, the most popular actress of the silent era. She began her career in 1908 working for famed director D.W. Griffith. By the time the Roaring Twenties rolled around, she had become so popular that she was making only one film a year and had cofounded her own production company, United Artists. In 1926, she starred in her only horror feature, *SPARROWS*, though the picture contained enough ingredients to satisfy fans of almost any genre: from comedy to inspirational to melodrama.

The plot concerns a baby farm in a nameless Southern swampland. The vile Grimes (Gustav von Seyffertitz) takes children from naive mothers who can't afford to support them. He puts them to work. When he really doesn't like them, he pitches them into the alligator-infested muck. The oldest of the children, an orphan named Molly (Pickford), acts as a mother to the rest of the gang, protecting them from Grimes' abusive and mean-spirited son (Spec O'Donnell). She misquotes the Bible to them, telling how God takes care of sparrows, how like sparrows



they are, and that all they need do is continue to ask for God's help. Eventually Grimes takes in a kidnapped child. When he learns the police are onto him, he decides to throw the child into the swamp. Plucky Molly, however, has planned a daring escape.

What makes this film horror is its unflinching, Dickensian take on the American South and the dark, monstrous swamps. The house, with its broken windows and failing wood, is Addams Family meets Ma and Pa Kettle.

The picture's biggest fault is its reliance on overzealous religious imagery to garner audience sympathy. This, however, does lead to the film's best special



effect, as a child dies, the barn wall dissolves to reveal the Lord watching over his sheep. He literally steps from the pasture to take the child into his arms. If anything, *SPARROWS* demonstrates what a capable director William "One Shot" Beaudine was during the silent era.

Image Entertainment's DVD reproduces the picture quality with surprisingly few blemishes. There are no speckles or discernible scratches, and the image is always clear and easy to see. Also included are a couple of early D.W. Griffith shorts starring Pickford. These are *WILFUL PEGGY* (1910) and *THE MENDER OF NETS* (1912).

—Chris Workman

## QUATERMASS AND THE PIT

Anchor Bay  
DVD, \$29.99

Hammer Films played such a revolutionary role in the revival of Gothic horror that it's easy to overlook the studio's contributions to sci-fi cinema. Nevertheless, a year before Britain's maverick movie company unleashed *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, Hammer brought a BBC television favorite to the screen with an imaginative 1955 adaptation of Nigel Kneale's sinister drama, *THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT* (released stateside as *THE CREEPING UNKNOWN*). The following year, intrepid scientist Bernard Quatermass (played by blustery, hard-nosed miscast Irish-American actor Brian Donlevy) returned in Hammer's equally intriguing *QUATERMASS 2* (or *ENEMY FROM SPACE*). Like its predecessor, the tense thriller was based on a six-part serial scripted by Kneale.

As soon as Technicolor horrors became Hammer's hallmark—established by a steady stream of *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* films—the studio set aside Quatermass (and for the most part, the sci-fi genre itself) for more than a decade. Then, in 1968, Professor Quatermass returned for his third, last, and finest Hammer excursion. The prof's triumphant comeback, *QUATERMASS AND THE PIT*, was released the same year as the bigger, higher-profile sci-fi hits *PLANET OF THE APES* and 2001 *A SPACE ODYSSEY*. Al-

though it's decidedly less famous than those space-age All-American epics, **QUATERMASS AND THE PIT** (released in the United States as **FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH**) remains an exciting, thought-provoking chiller that explores the provocative premise of a bond between extraterrestrial intelligence and man's evolution on Earth.

The setting is sixties London, where subway workers unearth what they believe is an unexploded German bomb—along with prehistoric skulls that date back some five million years. It turns out that the metallic object is actually an alien spaceship containing the locustlike bodies of an extraterrestrial crew. Investigating the explosive discovery are the relentless Quatermass (played by better suited Scottish character actor Andrew Keir), a brilliant anthropologist (James Donald), and a disbelieving military officer (Julian Glover). Unwittingly, the team releases the demonic, unseen power of the alien invaders.

**QUATERMASS AND THE PIT** is a compelling, first-rate chiller that blends sci-fi, horror, metaphysics, and mythology. Arguably Hammer's most accomplished feature, the cult classic is now available on DVD through Anchor Bay Entertainment's sterling Hammer Collection. The handsome, high-quality edition



includes a fascinating scene-by-scene chat with director Roy Ward Baker (1958's **A NIGHT TO REMEMBER**) and writer Kneale (who closed his saga with 1979's non-Hammer endeavor, **THE QUATERMASS CONCLUSION**). Other highlights of this widescreen (1.66:1 ratio), Dolby Digital 5.1 DVD include the "Sci-Fi" segment of **THE WORLD OF HAMMER** documentary series (narrated by Oliver Reed), plus the film's British trailer and its sensationalized American counterpart. ("Women will be defiled by invaders from outer space!")

"It all worked together," Kneale notes with obvious pride at the end of his warm, revealing audio commentary with Baker. "That's all one can hope for."

Terry Pace

#### THE GREAT ST. LOUIS BANK ROBBERY The Roan Group DVD, \$19.95

One of those "little" movies that benefited in later years from a fortuitous bit of casting, **THE GREAT ST. LOUIS BANK ROBBERY** (1959) boasts Steve McQueen leading a company of fairly obscure players. Filmed shortly before McQueen made a name for himself with the television series **WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE** and two years before **THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN** helped make him one of the major motion-picture stars of the sixties, **ST. LOUIS** is a bleak crime caper shot on location in stunning black and white.

McQueen plays George Fowler, a gullible onetime college football star whose life has fallen apart since he took a bribe and was expelled from school. Reluctantly, he accepts a job as getaway driver for a group of petty hoods who plan on robbing the Southwest Bank. One of the thieves, Gino (David Clarke), is the brother of the girl (Molly McCarthy) George once dated and George foolishly attempts to reconcile with her, a move that induces the ire of the gang leader John Egan (Crahan Denton). It seems that Egan has had a disdain for women ever since his mother wound up dead at the bottom of a flight of stairs, the result of the old lady hitting the sauce too much. As the heist draws nearer, each gang member begins to show contempt for the others. Distrust and suspicion bring out their more pathological traits. In time, it is clear that George does not belong with this vile crew, a realization he comes to only after he is in too deep.

The success of the film comes from its gritty, stark look and the believability of its low-life characters. On the downside, there is almost too much time spent on the buildup to the actual robbery. By the time the movie approaches its hour-point, one might be wondering if any crime is actually going to take place.

Although there is a thoroughly professional job by Denton as the mirthless and ultimately dangerous leader, it is McQueen who grabs our attention. In his second starring role, following the cult favorite **THE BLOB** (1958), he is sympathetic and engaging as a wrongheaded young man who doesn't have the brains to know how to better his lot in life.

Rounding off the no-name supporting cast are the actual members of the St. Louis police department who were involved in the actual case on which this movie is based. Although their involvement is supposed to pay tribute to their heroism, it is shocking to see how callously these men fire bullets and hurl tear gas into the bank during the final shootout, endangering the lives of the innocent patrons held hostage inside.

The letterboxed DVD is taken from various 35mm materials, resulting in a print that is mostly clear but spoiled by occasional scratches and a few abrupt picture jumps. The only extra feature is a single-screen list of cast principals and major behind-the-scenes credits, minus



background information. It might have been interesting to point out that the movie boasts two directors, Charles Guggenheim and John Stix, neither of whom ever directed any other dramatic feature film before or since. An explanation might also have been in order for the conflicting release dates given on the packaging (the movie was released in November of 1959, but most theaters showed it in early 1960) and the fact that the title appears onscreen minus the word **GREAT**.

—Barry Monush

#### THE MALTESE FALCON

Warner Home Video

DVD, \$24.98

As Sam Spade says, "Let's talk about the black bird." Half a century after its original theatrical release, **THE MALTESE FALCON** remains Hollywood's quintessential hard-boiled detective thriller. Based on Dashiell Hammett's classic novel of murder, mystery, and deception, the 1941 Warner Brothers feature marked the trailblazing directorial debut of John Huston, who would develop into one of the century's towering screen talents.

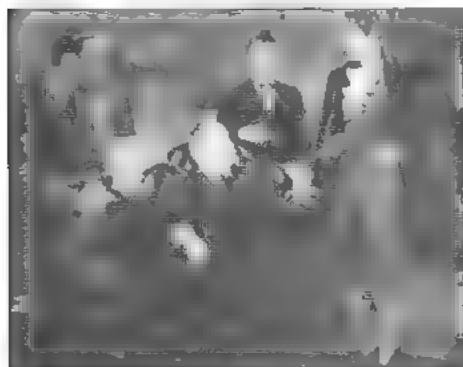
The tense, brooding melodrama also established the dark, menacing film noir moviemaking style that dominated Hollywood crime dramas of the forties. Its stylistic influence can be detected in **LAURA** (1944), **DOUBLE INDEMNITY** (1944), **SCARLET STREET** (1945), and other noir masterworks. **THE MALTESE FALCON** also pioneered the art of screen ensemble acting, with its lively cast of rogues, rascals, killers, and thieves—Mary Astor's duplicitous femme fatale Brigid O'Shaughnessy, Sydney Greenstreet's verbose conniver Casper Gutman, Peter Lorre's effeminate malefactor Joel Cairo, and Elisha Cook Jr.'s weaselly pint-sized gunslinger Wilmer Cook.

Last but not least, **THE MALTESE FALCON** elevated studio player Humphrey Bogart to the ranks of rough-edged Hollywood stardom. With his cynical-survivalist role as private eye Spade, Bogart established his indelible film persona. ("When you're slapped, you'll take it and like it," he declares.)

Under the banner of its Humphrey Bogart Collection, Turner Home Entertainment (which owns the Warners library) recently reissued **THE MALTESE FALCON** on both videocassette (in a special-edition clamshell package) and DVD. Unfortunately, the collector's edition DVD is, at best, a mixed blessing. The movie itself is as magnetizing as ever—although Astor is too transparent and looks and



acts far too matronly—but the powers that be at Turner (the same outfit that shortly before his death, infuriated Huston by colorizing his beautiful black-and-white film) have taken little care to present it in its best possible form. The print, though adequate, sorely needs restoration—particularly when compared to the phenomenal preservation work demon-



strated by, say The Criterion Collection's recent DVD edition of *THE THIRD MAN* (1950). The *FALCON* DVD transfer looks little better than the movie's most recent VHS release a few years ago. In this age of digital restoration, the print's occasional imperfections are especially irritating.

Also, this so-called collector's edition includes precious few extras to entice serious movie buffs. The DVD features are limited to slim production notes and some Bogart trailers. The definitive edition of such a monumental film cries out for—at the very least—a featurette, studies of Huston and Bogart, and an audio-commentary track.

Still, even in this faulty format, *THE MALTESE FALCON* contains—to famously misquote Shakespeare—"the, uh, stuff that dreams are made of."

—Terry Pace

# LURED

Kino

DVD, \$29.95

"There's a homicidal maniac loose somewhere in the vast honeycomb of London. A maniac with a weakness for pretty, young girls," announces Harley Temple, Scotland Yard Inspector, and we're off! Maniacs—and boring, ol' sane folks—with a weakness for forties thrillers offering murder, suspense, damsels in distress, and Boris Karloff, take note! The 1947 United Artists mystery *LURED* finally has been made available on DVD by Kino on Video, and you are heartily encouraged to take the bait.

In London, seven attractive young women who answered an ad in a newspaper "personal column" (the film's alternate title) are missing and feared dead, victims of The Poet Killer. The murderer is a wily fiend who composes sick verses inspired by the morbid poetry of the 19th-century French "madman" Charles Baudelaire, equating beauty with death. When Lucy Barnard (Taris Chandler), the comely friend of smart-mouthed taxi dancer Sandra Carpenter (Lucille Ball),

tragically becomes the latest headline, the headstrong, flame-haired Yank decides—with typical American pluck—to hunt down her friend's killer. And why not? An ineffectual Scotland Yard has been embarrassingly relegated to the role of rodent in the humiliating game of cat and mouse initiated by the crafty maniac. Despite having received seven typewritten correspondences containing clues from the killer, Inspectors Temple (Charles Coburn), Gordon (Alan Napier), and Mercer (Robert Coote) are unable to solve the case. When Temple meets Sandra, he instantly recognizes that the dishing dance-hall hostess could be highly beneficial. Sandra passes the amateur detective test by demonstrating her amazing powers of observation and phenomenal memory, not to mention her keen, if cheeky, ability at character analysis. The perspicacious inspector naturally sizes her up as an ideal lure to trap the psychopathic poet and recruits the ready, willing, and able doll to the force.

*LURED* is a classy, handsomely produced mystery distinguished by the stylish art direction of Nicholas Remisof and *noirish* cinematography of William Daniels. The commendable if unremarkable screenplay by Leo Rosten is based on a 1939 French film, *PIEGES*, that featured Maurice Chevalier and Erich Von Stroheim (in the role essayed by Karloff). The mystery of its leisurely paced and uncomplicated plot is relatively easy to solve, but the appeal of *LURED* is not the narrative but its outstanding cast.

Star Lucille Ball, 36 years old at the time, is absolutely ravishing. Fans who know Lucy strictly as the scatterbrained wife of Ricky Ricardo will be floored by her jaw-dropping glamour and capabilities as a serious actress.

Though his dark, baleful physiognomy did not qualify him as a silver-screen heartthrob, Boris Karloff was nonetheless a movie god, the public-appointed Pluto who ruled Hollywood cinema's netherworld. Karloff is fourth billed, but his brief participation amounts to little more than a cameo—which, for fans, will assuredly be the highlight of the movie. His splendidly flamboyant characterization of eccentric couturier Charles van Druten is played according to type, with customary scowling and lip-curling malevolence. Karloff also brings forth the comic undertones of the dapper, distinguished, and dangerously dotty dress designer who hires the fair Sandra as a model to show off his latest creation... to a bulldog!

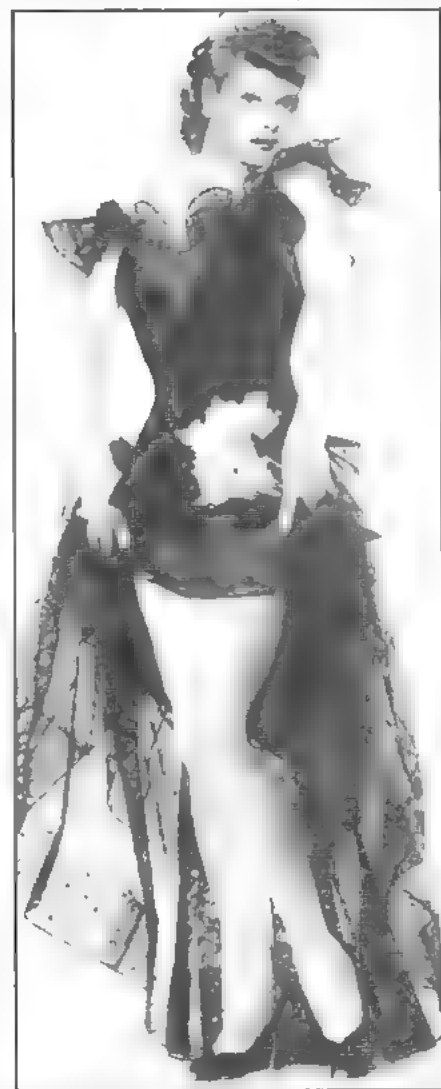
An even more delicious treat is the refreshingly atypical surprisingly charming performance by George Zucco—who, believe it or not, provides the comedy relief. Zucco's role as the formidable Inspector H.R. Barrett enables him to display some uncharacteristic derring-do—twice he valiantly saves an imperiled Sandra from harm. During a deliriously exciting fistfight with Karloff, Zucco repays his adversary for the rough treatment he had earlier received at the hands of Karloff (or more accurately, J. Carrol Naish)

in *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1944). Who knew that Georgie could be so macho and such a... brute!

*LURED* also features caustic, charismatic George Sanders as nightclub entrepreneur Robert Fleming, Joseph Calleia as a sinister (what else?) foreigner named Mr. Moryani, Cedric Hardwicke, delivering a typically understated performance as Fleming's painfully boring partner, Julian Wilde; and Alan Mowbray as crafty butler Lyle Maxwell.

Kino's splendid transfer presents sharp, high black, white, and gray contrasts and vivid images. The source print is in almost excellent condition, modestly blemished by occasional scratches and speckles that are not grievously distracting. The audio is satisfactory, but soft. In the simply designed, easy-to-use menu, a question mark is the navigational device for stepping through the 16 chapters, which are not numbered but titled.

Because his name and image are so prominently featured on the package, Kino obviously recognized that Boris Karloff is still a potent draw, but devotees lured by Kino's wily marketing ploy will find additional rewards in Douglas Sirk's rediscovered thriller. George Zucco fans,



don't even think twice—immediately add LURED to your movie library, and revel in his thoroughly winning performance  
—Michael Anthony Carlisle

## THE HIDEOUS SUN DEMON

Image Entertainment  
DVD, \$24.99

Through the miracle of DVD, director/star Robert Clarke's 1959 masterpiece of sci-fi schlock is revealed to be not half as hideous as certain critics have claimed. In fact, it turns out to be a moody mutation of genres and genres, the missing link between Ed Wood, Sam Fuller, and David Lynch. Granted it starts out pretty slow, as characters sit around in white rooms talking about what the budget won't let us see, but things get roaring once our tipsy titular monster/scientist, Gilbert McKenna (Clarke), enters the picture. After being exposed to massive radiation, the first thing he does from his hospital bed is



try to seduce his nurse and get a drink! (He ain't no John Agar!) The nurse (Fran Leighton) wheels him up to the roof for some fresh air, and before long the radiation from the sun tans him into... you guessed it!

Soon our lounge lizard antihero is zipping down the Pacific Coast Highway in his groovy convertible under moody, day-for-night gray skies in his quest for escape. At a local bar, he becomes transfixed by a voluptuous and sleazy chanteuse named Trudy (Nan Petersen), who plays weird piano and croons the mournful Sun Demon theme, "Strange Interlude." Soon enough, he's pawing her down by the beach, forgetting all about his aversion to the morning sun as he drinks and drinks and drinks some more.

Give Clarke credit in the masochist department for writing himself a part for which he must run amok under the merciless L.A. sun in a stifling rubber monster suit. Give him credit in the guts department for portraying his scientist not as

the typical square-jawed hero of the era but as a wild-eyed drunk who moans in self-pity as his life spirals out of control. Even after stern warnings from his doctor, weak-willed McKenna keeps wandering out at night, drawn by that unquenchable thirst for booze, blondes, and trouble. Like all good noir antiheroes, he beds the blonde, gets the crap kicked out of him, crushes a rat with his bare hands, and finds himself in an ever-tightening noose of trouble. Even as you laugh at his lizard mask, McKenna's rapid descent past the point of no return is believable, even chilling. It's *THE LOST WEEKEND* (1945) in a monster-suit.

The disc sports only a trailer as far as extras go. An audio commentary from Clarke should have been a must. Instead, we must make do with liner notes taken from Clarke's autobiography. The movie itself looks as good as it ever needs to thanks to a crisp digital transfer from a nicely weather-beaten print. It really brings out a haunting quality in the day-for-night scenes, infusing them with a strange, melancholy depth. So if you've been holding out on seeing this baby because of some of the hideous reviews you've read, consider yourself all out of excuses. The sun is up.

Erich Kuersten

## DESTINATION MOON

Image Entertainment  
DVD, \$24.95

It's impossible for me, a child of the Space Age, to imagine how George Pal's 1950 sci-fi adventure *DESTINATION MOON* must look to young viewers of today. Throughout my childhood, the image of space travel was the sleek, silver, single-stage, winged "rocket ship" first personified by the *Rocketship Luna*. The designs were direct descendants of Werner von Braun's dreaded V-2 missile, reinterpreted for peaceful exploration by the dean of space artists, Chesley Bonestell. The stacked pipe-bombs that NASA rockets turned out to be, by necessity of lobbying people to the moon before the Soviets, came as a visual disappointment despite all their spectacle and success.

*DESTINATION MOON* tells the story of three scientists (played by John Archer, Warner Anderson, and Tom Powers) who want to go to the moon in 1950. Interestingly, they decide that private industry is better suited to such a project than the government, a sentiment echoed today by a slew of corporations with ideas for the first manned Mars mission. With public sentiment against their looney idea and a pending cease-and-desist order to provide a momentary dramatic impetus, our protagonists decide on a rather sudden early departure on the greatest adventure in history. The trip is eventful and exciting by the standards of the time (meaning they find conflict and danger with nature and themselves, without the intervention of shape-shifting aliens, enemy space fighters, or gaseous anomalies).

With three scientists in the crew and a technically educational script, the audi-

ence needed a Watson for purposes of exposition. This is provided by some poor schub (Dick Wesson) they talk into going at the last second. The hapless technician is constantly asking what's going on, in



possibly the woist Brooklyn accent ever heard. The remarkable thing about the script is that all the technical answers the fella gets are correct.

With no less a science fiction luminary than Robert Heinlein contributing to the screenplay, which is based upon his novel *Rocketship Galileo* (1947), the script takes no poetic license with science and nature. From the workings of an atomic rocket motor to the radio time lag between Earth and her distant daughter, there's a surprising amount of real science. The landing sequence, filmed 20 years before Apollo 11, bears startling similarities to footage of the real landing. Okay, the spacesuits make the actors look like stacks of brightly colored balloon animals, but at the time they were a practical design. Bonestell's moonscapes are as spectacular as any of his art, as is the full-sized set of the landing site, but it wasn't long before reality showed the cracked-mud lunar surface to be completely wrong. (The cracks were added to give the surface a sense of perspective.) All the technical stuff, by the way, is ably explained by Woody Woodpecker in a Walter Lantz cartoon shown during a briefing scene. It's rather surprising to know that we were this savvy about space science in 1950 when most sci-fi films throughout the successive decades blew accuracy off in favor of spectacle.

It's just that accuracy that makes me wonder how modern film audiences will react to this classic. If current genre films are a clue, audiences today need slimy aliens and lotsa loud explosions edited very quickly. I hope they give this a try and see that they're wrong.

The Technicolor feature looks spectacular save for some skips and a random scratch, but, for a 50th Anniversary Edition, this release is completely lacking any extras. The menu provides scene selections and the feature is followed by one theatrical trailer.

Michael Anthony Carlisle

## THE BIG COMBO

Image Entertainment  
DVD, \$24.99

The world of *THE BIG COMBO* (1955) is one of an endless and oppressive dark-



ness, with hardly any daylight shots, illuminated occasionally by neon signs or the glare of a searchlight. In this pulpy crime drama, COMBO doesn't refer to a jazz band, but to The Combination—or Mob. Cornel Wilde stars as Leonard Diamond, a police lieutenant obsessed with bringing down the Combo's sadistic boss, Mr. Brown (Richard Conte, who replaced Jack Palance just prior to shooting). However, his captain (Robert Middleton) is convinced that Diamond's real obsession is Mr. Brown's beautiful but troubled girlfriend, Susan (played by beautiful but troubled Jean Wallace, Wilde's real-life spouse).

While the conflict is apparently between the police and the criminals, it's the twisted relationships that fuel this picture. Susan hates Brown but can't seem to leave him. Diamond's in love with Susan, but sleeping with a stripper (Helene Stanton), whose affection he won't return. Brown is in love with, and living with Susan, but married to someone else. Ironically, the most positive relationship in the film is between Brown's hitmen, played by Lee Van Cleef and Earl Holliman. Professionally ruthless, the two men genuinely care for each other.

THE BIG COMBO's 88 minutes are packed with torture and sex—and contains one of the most outrageously suggestive scenes in fifties cinema, featuring

Conte and Wallace. Director Joseph Lew is arranged for Wilde to be off the set when the scene was shot, and when the star finally saw it, he was outraged and never forgave Lewis.



The photography is everything you want in a *film noir* and the DVD really brings out the contrast, as well as the film's subtle use of sound. Sadly, there are no extras on this disc.

—Todd Livingston

#### A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM 20th Century Fox DVD, \$34.98

Since 1909, there have been 10 films made for the silver screen that have borne the name of Shakespeare's comedy-of-errors fantasy. When Kenneth Branagh's HEN

RY V (1990) showed Hollywood that the Bard's plays could make a profit, the floodgates opened for a wave of modern interpretations of the classic plays.

This 1999 star studded version by Michael Hoffman changes the time and location to the "village of Monte Athena in Italy at the turn of the 19th century," but retains Shakespeare's dialogue. The cast, for the most part, is wonderful. David Strathairn (one of the most underrated actors working today) turns in a small, but excellent performance as Theseus. Rupert Everett's Oberon and Stanley Tucci's Puck have great rapport and play perfectly off each other. Kevin Kline's Nick Bottom is truly wonderful. He brings a deep complexity to this dreamer who joyously loves acting as an escape from his depressing home life.

And then there are the David E. Kelly twins. It's brave of Calista Flockheart to take on a role so dangerously close to her Ally McBeal. Happily, though, she rides the line as Helena, but never crosses it. Her desperate longing for Demetrius is wonderfully played. Michelle Pfeiffer's Titania, on the other hand, is comparable to Keanu Reeve's Don John in MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING (1993). She is the, beautiful, ethereally enchanting—and then she speaks. It's horrible, deadly

Continued on page 77

#### POSTERS

LAND UNKNOWN  
MR. SARONICUS  
LEECH WOMAN  
TEENAGE CAVEMAN  
KILLERS FROM SPACE  
CAT PEOPLE  
LOST MISSILE  
THE CYCLOPS  
CIRCUS OF HORRORS  
DRUMS OF FU  
MANCHU  
HOUSE OF USHER  
JUNGLE WOMAN  
S.O.S. COAST GUARD  
THE VAMPIRE  
ALLIGATOR PEOPLE  
MANY OTHERS



BRUCE TINKEL  
P.O. BOX 65

EDISON, NJ 08818-0065

EMAIL: HORROR716@AOL.COM

WEBSITE: WWW.ANGELFIRE.COM/NJ2/HORRORSHOP

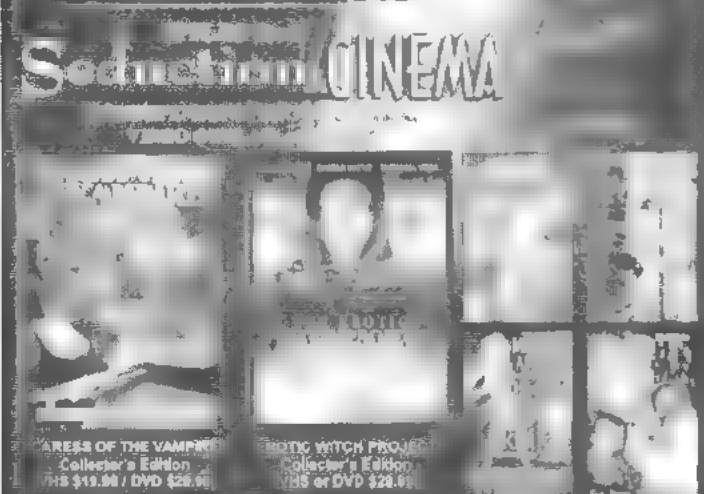
SEND \$2.00 FOR LIST OF AVAILABLE TILES

OR VISIT MY WEBSITE

#### VIDEOS

CULTI  
BLACK CAMEL  
HYPNOTIC EYE  
SHE CREATURE  
BRAINIAC  
CREEPING TERROR  
CRY OF THE  
WEREWOLF  
HOMICIDAL  
THE LODGER  
HANGOVER SQUARE  
FROM HELL IT CAME  
NIGHT OF TERROR  
MAD MONSTER  
13th CHAIR  
MANY OTHER  
RARE TITLES

## ALTERNATIVE CINEMA INDIE VIDEO & DVD



Order by Mail: Send check or MO w/ payment and \$5.00 flat fee, \$2.50 ea. add. item in ALTERNATIVE CINEMA VIDEO/SELF, P.O. 371 Dept. ST, Glenwood, NJ 07418  
VISA / MASTERCARD ORDERS Call: (873) 886-8332 Fax your order to: (873) 768-8844

Remember to include exp. date of your Credit Card.  
We'll make the Art. shipping from Glenwood, New Jersey and \$5.00 to the ALTERNATIVE CINEMA.

Order by Mail: Send check or MO w/ payment and \$5.00 flat fee, \$2.50 ea. add. item in ALTERNATIVE CINEMA VIDEO/SELF, P.O. 371 Dept. ST, Glenwood, NJ 07418  
VISA / MASTERCARD ORDERS Call: (873) 886-8332 Fax your order to: (873) 768-8844

Remember to include exp. date of your Credit Card.  
We'll make the Art. shipping from Glenwood, New Jersey and \$5.00 to the ALTERNATIVE CINEMA.

www.AlternativeCinema.com

WARNER  
BROS.

# THE WOLF MAN

on DVD

28 SCARLET STREET





**LEFT:** Bela Lugosi hoped to play the lead role in 1941's *THE WOLF MAN* (as the son of Claude Rains?), but had to content himself with the small cameo of Bela the Gypsy while Lon Chaney Jr. was propelled to horror stardom. It turned out to be one of Lugosi's most memorable performances. **RIGHT:** The supporting cast of *THE WOLF MAN* couldn't possibly be bettered, though some of the actors are given precious little to do. Maria Ouspenskaya (as Maleva the Gypsy) and Claude Rains (as Sir John Talbot) were among the lucky ones.

By all rights, George Wagner's *THE WOLF MAN* (1941) is to the forties crop of Universal horrors what Whale's *FRANKENSTEIN* is to the thirties. It should be the film that defines the era. In many ways—not all of them good—it does, so it's not a huge surprise that Universal decided to move from their acclaimed thirties Universal Horrors DVD series (even though they've quite a few films to go before that decade is completely represented) to the forties with this very title. As a first choice for the decade, it's a savvy one—after all, this is the film that gave the studio its last great monster and its last great horror star. Lon Chaney, Jr., soon to be christened the studio's "master character creator," had been groomed for horror by Universal in the less ambitious *MAN MADE MONSTER* (1941), a film that was almost equally a model for their forties approach to horror (especially as concerns slickness and budget) as *THE WOLF MAN*. Moreover, questions of its merit to one side, *THE WOLF MAN* is unquestionably one of Universal's best-loved offerings.

The studio's one previous attempt on the topic of lycanthropy, *WEREWOLF OF LONDON* (1935), had not quite captured the public's fancy, not in the least because it was a too complex work that offered a "hero," Wilfrid Glendon (Henry Hall), who wasn't and never could engage audience sympathy in any traditional sense. Glendon was a fairly dry character, an intellectual, a man of science and reason facing a situation his faculties told him was arrant nonsense until he could deny the fact no longer. In the bargain, he was an older man neglecting a young and seemingly doting wife in the name of science. Glendon is a tragic figure, but not one designed to appeal to the widest possible audience. (Here's this smart, rich guy with a nice wife and he wants to run around Tibet flower-hunting with a younger man—try selling that to the average Depression-era audience!)

No such misjudgment marred *THE WOLF MAN*. Instead of an intellectual, the film offered the viewer the ultra-sympathetic anti-intellectual for its rethought hero, Lawrence "Just call me Larry" Talbot, a man who is the ultimate in "just folks," frequently reminding us how limited and down-to-earth he is, a man not in denial, but one who just plain doesn't understand what is happening to him or why. It may not be terribly intellectual. It may not be terribly challenging. But it is something that any viewer can understand, appreciate, and identify with. The appeal was and is immediate and, yes, I'm going to say it, universal.

Larry Talbot was an instant character of mythological import and impact—even if it was a myth almost by default. Some are born mythological, some achieve mythological status, and some have mythological status thrust on them. That's true of Larry Talbot in more than one sense, as well as the character's creator, Lon Chaney, Jr., whose mythological status began with the family name and was forced on him by a studio in need of a younger, more American, more tractable horror star than Boris Karloff or Bela Lugosi.

Not that Universal didn't do right by him. *THE WOLF MAN* is one classy showcase for Chaney, one that surrounds him with just about the most amazing cast imaginable—Claude Rains, Evelyn Ankers, Maria Ouspenskaya, Bela Lugosi, Warren William, Ralph Bellamy, Patric Knowles, and Fay Helm. Even in the halcyon days of the Laemmles, did any Universal Horror boast a cast of such combined power? The one unfortunate aspect is that most of the jaw-dropping cast really aren't given much to do. Bellamy and Knowles are particularly ill-served (one wonders if the following year's *THE GREAT IMPERSONATION* and *THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. RX* weren't in some measure to make it up to them), while top-billed Rains, bizarrely cast as the hulking Chaney's father, is handed a somewhat schizophrenic character (one part Judge Hardy to one part Mr. Murdstone) that the actor gamely tries to make real. The others are better served by far, with one of the best performances coming from Lugosi in the tiny but showy role of Bela, the gypsy who unwittingly inflicts the curse of lycanthropy on Larry.

In the end, though, it's Chaney's show, and it's a testament to the often berated actor's strange charisma and skill that he manages to successfully pull it off. (It helps that a cast who could have doubtless eaten him alive genuinely supports him.) Something about the Larry Talbot character connected with Chaney in a way many roles didn't—perhaps it really *was* the character that was most like him, with the sympathy and simplicity of his Lennie from *OF MICE AND MEN* (1939), but without the simple-mindedness. It certainly matches much of what we know of him—an utterly unshifty, fun-loving guy with the menace of pent-up hostility just beneath the surface. (This same sense of danger, which was partly due to Chaney's physical build, is what made him quite the most successful of the studio's *Frankenstein Monsters* after Karloff.)

Apart from its historical value as cementing Chaney's career, *THE WOLF MAN* is significant for finally establishing

BELOW Maria Ouspenskaya was a celebrated acting teacher and disciple of Konstantin Stanislavsky, but today she's best remembered for her two appearances as Maleva. **THE WOLF MAN** (1941) and **FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN** (1943). **RIGHT** Makeup maestro Jack Pierce gives Lon Chaney Jr. a light trim. **PAGE 31 LEFT** A fragile Bela Lugosi played the Frankenstein Monster opposite Chaney Jr. as Larry Talbot in **FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN**. **PAGE 31 RIGHT** The Wolf Man howled his last in the sidesplitting **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN** (1948)

the path Universal chose to follow with its forbes films. In many respects, the horror film was changing. The same year that Universal made **THE WOLF MAN**, Paramount offered the more psychological horrors of **THE MAD DOCTOR** and **AMONG THE LIVING**, while over at RKO producer Val Lewton was about to embark on the creation of an alternative definition of movie horror with **CAT PEOPLE** (1942), a film ironically spawned by **THE WOLF MAN**. Even more ironic is the fact that Universal actually got there first... well, almost. As conceived and originally written by Curt Siodmak, **THE WOLF MAN** was psychological horror and not a monster movie. Larry Talbot (originally named Larry Gill and American rather than a transplanted Welshman) had much the same experiences in this original concept, but with one significant difference—it was never made clear whether he actually turned into a werewolf or



merely thought he did. There are certainly traces of this approach in the film as it stands. "I believe that anything can happen to a man in his own mind," remarks Sir John Talbot (Rams) at one point, while Dr. Lloyd (Warren Williams) is constantly talking in psychiatric terms. This may also explain the film's peculiar inconsistencies, such as the depiction of Lugosi's lycanthrope as an actual wolf instead of the bipedal monster into which Chaney transforms.

Whatever the artistic or intellectual value of Siodmak's idea, Universal knew one thing: monsters sell. With that in mind, the studio decided to literalize the Wolf Man and so create a brand new monster. Commercially, it proved to be a shrewd choice, since the Chaney werewolf, as created by Jack Pierce, was an immediate hit with the public and remains so nearly 60 years later. Siodmak's version may have been more artistically valid, but it's doubtful it would have attained anything like the iconic status this literalization gives the film. (It certainly didn't when he tried it again, in the 1951 **BRIDE OF THE GORILLA**, which Siodmak not only wrote but also directed.)

Not all of Siodmak's deeper implications were lost in the process. In placing his central American character in a foreign setting, Siodmak hit on something that made his hero a little different. True, Larry was good-natured and likable, but there's a marked downside to the character, a variation on the W. Alfred Glendon character in **WEREWOLF OF LONDON**. Glendon the Britisher becomes a werewolf in foreign lands when he's bitten during his scientific expedition. Similarly, Larry the American (by the time of shooting, Americanized rather than literally American) is a stranger in a strange land, but his misfortune befalls him not through scientific zeal. Rather, Larry barges into his fate by trying to be a good guy and rescue Jenny Williams (Fay Helm) from Bela the werewolf. In this manner, Siodmak turned Larry into an American everyman, a horror-film variation on Graham Green's *Ugly American*—a nice enough, well intentioned, remarkably unobtrusive fellow, who thinks too little, acts too quickly, and often hasn't a clue as to what he's getting into or its consequences. This explains why viewers—especially American viewers—respond so positively to the character and feel so connected to him. Larry is all of us in miniature—that which is best in us and that which is worst. As is often the case, it's the sort of personality best observed by an outsider such as Siodmak.

Though it boasts an undercurrent of deeper meaning, it's perhaps a mistake to delve too deeply into **THE WOLF MAN**—or any other of Universal's forbes output, for that matter. True, there are certainly numerous—sometimes fascinating—thematic implications in the film. Apart from the question of Larry as the American abroad, there are indica-



tions that the film addresses lycanthropy in terms of the sexual awakening of puberty. (Is it wholly coincidental that Larry's werewolfry is first set in motion when he's attracted to a pretty girl, especially when the ultimate effect concerns bodily changes and the sprouting of hair?) At the same time, there is the chilling connection between the appearance of the tattoo-like pentagram on the hand of those marked to die by the senseless anatomical violence of the werewolf and those not dissimilarly marked in Hitler's Germany (a fact well known to the refugee Siodmak, but not common coin with the American moviegoing public of 1941). Nevertheless, **THE WOLF MAN** is first and foremost an entertainment—an horrific fairy tale that takes place in a proper fairy tale world. The film is meant to be exciting and fun (albeit fun with a downbeat ending), not a lesson. Doubtless, this is what Universal most wanted, if for no other reason than the studio had no desire to court the wrath of the censors and the guardians of morality as the Laemmles had done by accident in the thirties.

Nor was Universal terribly interested in being especially cerebral, which is likely why none of the Universal Horrors of the forties were in the hands of such visionary directors as James Whale or Robert Florey or Edgar G. Ulmer or Tod Browning. Instead, the projects were given over to men who, at their best, were talented craftsmen—Arthur Lubin, Christy Cabanne, William Nigh, Erle C. Kenton, Roy William Neill, Ford Beebe, and, for **THE WOLF MAN**, George Waggoner. (A case could be made that Edward Dmytryk was in a different league, but since he was handed one of the studio's silliest and least successful projects, 1943's **CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN**, there's more absurdity and stock shots than vision in his entry.) A former actor, songwriter, screenwriter, and occasional producer, Waggoner seems more a dilettante who just wanted to be in the movies than a filmmaker with anything in particular to say. Waggoner's approach to film was slick, stylish, and clever, exactly the right tone for **THE WOLF MAN**—and he'd certainly established his bona fides for the project with **MAN MADE MONSTER** and **HORROR ISLAND** earlier that same year. With the help of the brilliant Universal technicians and the studio's standing sets, Waggoner crafted a fine little film that he kept moving at a nice pace, just the right touch of atmosphere. Perhaps he worked too fast and was a little too cavalier with some of the small details. A more meticulous director would probably have avoided the unintentionally risible moment when the Wolf Man, after his first transformation, daintily and fastidiously hikes his pants legs up as he sets out on his murderous foray! Similarly, a more careful craftsman might have questioned whatever would possess a snarling beast to invariably change into the janitor uniform that the Wolf Man prefers for his evenings of mayhem. Waggoner merely accepts, and

since he's working in a genre requiring the viewer's own suspension of disbelief, it matters little. His own lack of concern may in fact strengthen the film's sense of conviction.

Seeing **THE WOLF MAN** on DVD isn't as much of a revelation as seeing some of the other titles Universal has released. Many of the TV prints fans were subjected to over the years may not have been pristine, but neither were they disgraceful, as very much was the case with many of the earlier films. Even so, this remastered transfer does present a beautiful copy of **THE WOLF MAN**. From the minute the sparklingly clear and sharp "New Universal" lucite globe with its whirling stars appears on the screen, the viewer realizes that this is as close as he's ever likely to get to seeing the film as it was presented when it was brand new. On this level alone, the DVD release is a must-have and isn't going to disappoint collectors of Universal Horrors.

And this is a good thing, because the extras this time around are sadly wanting. No one expected a major discovery such as the missing—apparently lost—bear-wrestling scene, but the documentary is quite the least involved and involving of any of the titles released so far. The choice of John Landis as host/narrator is a curious one (wouldn't Joe Dante, whose 1981 **THE HOWLING** even included scenes from **THE WOLF MAN**, have been a better choice?), and while it's been previously noted that there's been too much sameness to the documentaries' overreliance on the *Usual Suspects* as genre experts, this one is missing even most of those! In other documentaries we've been treated to survivors from the era, or at least their descendants. The best we get here are clips of an interview with Curt Siodmak. Where is Ron Chaney to discuss his grandfather's most famous and defining role? There's a distinct sense of this one being rushed in its creation, with evidence of a lackadaisical attitude about the entire project. (The following year's **THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN** is mentioned as being made before **THE WOLF MAN**. So savvy and insightful a film historian as David Skal knows better.) The most pleasing aspect of the documentary is a discussion of the film's score by musicians John Morgan and Bill Stromberg, who as arranger and conductor have recreated and recorded the classic Universal scores for *Marco Polo*. It's a pity they weren't given more time. Universal is on to a good thing, an important thing, with these DVD releases of their horror films, but it looks more and more like they're about to drop the ball. The excitement and completely deserved praise that greeted the DVD of **FRANKENSTEIN** (1931) is worlds away from what is going on with **THE WOLF MAN**. Sure, they've given us a good transfer of the film itself, and, yes, they've got a preschool audience in those of us who already love these movies, but they're wrong if they expect their increasingly slipshod approach to effectively broaden that audience.



BELOW: Maria Ouspenskaya was a celebrated acting teacher and disciple of Konstantin Stanislavsky, but today she's best remembered for her two appearances as Maleva: *THE WOLF MAN* (1941) and *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN* (1943). RIGHT: Makeup maestro Jack Pierce gives Lon Chaney Jr. a light trim. PAGE 31 LEFT: A fragile Bela Lugosi played the Frankenstein Monster opposite Chaney Jr. as Larry Talbot in *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN*. PAGE 31 RIGHT: The Wolf Man howled his last in the sidesplitting *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* (1948).

the path Universal chose to follow with its forties films. In many respects, the horror film was changing. The same year that Universal made *THE WOLF MAN*, Paramount offered the more psychological horrors of *THE MAD DOCTOR* and *AMONG THE LIVING*, while over at RKO producer Val Lewton was about to embark on the creation of an alternative definition of movie horror with *CAT PEOPLE* (1942), a film ironically spawned by *THE WOLF MAN*. Even more ironic is the fact that Universal actually got there first... well, almost. As conceived and originally written by Curt Siodmak, *THE WOLF MAN* was psychological horror and not a monster movie. Larry Talbot (originally named Larry Gill and American rather than a transplanted Welshman) had much the same experiences in this original concept, but with one significant difference—it was never made clear whether he actually turned into a werewolf or



merely thought he did. There are certainly traces of this approach in the film as it stands. "I believe that anything can happen to a man in his own mind," remarks Sir John Talbot (Rains) at one point, while Dr. Lloyd (Warren Williams) is constantly talking in psychiatric terms. This may also explain the film's peculiar inconsistencies, such as the depiction of Lugosi's lycanthrope as an actual wolf instead of the bipedal monster into which Chaney transforms

Whatever the artistic or intellectual value of Siodmak's idea, Universal knew one thing: monsters sell. With that in mind, the studio decided to literalize the Wolf Man and so create a brand new monster. Commercially, it proved to be a shrewd choice, since the Chaney werewolf, as created by Jack Pierce, was an immediate hit with the public and remains so nearly 60 years later. Siodmak's version may have been more artistically valid, but it's doubtful it would have attained anything like the iconic status this literalization gives the film. (It certainly didn't when he tried it again, in the 1951 *BRIDE OF THE GORILLA*, which Siodmak not only wrote but also directed.)

Not all of Siodmak's deeper implications were lost in the process. In placing his central American character in a foreign setting, Siodmak hit on something that made his hero a little different. True, Larry was good-natured and likable, but there's a marked downside to the character, a variation on the Wilfrid Glendon character in *WEREWOLF OF LONDON*. Glendon the Britisher becomes a werewolf in foreign lands when he's bitten during his scientific expedition. Similarly, Larry the American (by the time of shooting, Americanized rather than literally American) is a stranger in a strange land, but his misfortune befalls him not through scientific zeal. Rather, Larry barges into his fate by trying to be a good guy and rescue Jenny Williams (Fay Helm) from Bela the werewolf. In this manner, Siodmak turned Larry into an American everyman, a horror film variation on Graham Green's *Ugly American*—a nice enough, well-intentioned, remarkably unsubtle fellow, who thinks too little, acts too quickly, and often hasn't a clue as to what he's getting into or its consequences. This explains why viewers—especially American viewers—respond so positively to the character and feel so connected to him. Larry is all of us in miniature—that which is best in us and that which is worst. As is often the case, it's the sort of personality best observed by an outsider such as Siodmak.

Though it boasts an undercurrent of deeper meaning, it's perhaps a mistake to delve too deeply into *THE WOLF MAN*—or any other of Universal's forties output, for that matter. True, there are certainly numerous—sometimes fascinating—thematic implications in the film. Apart from the question of Larry as the American abroad, there are indica-





tions that the film addresses lycanthropy in terms of the sexual awakening of puberty. (Is it wholly coincidental that Larry's werewolfy is first set in motion when he's attracted to a pretty girl, especially when the ultimate effect concerns bodily changes and the sprouting of hair?) At the same time, there is the chilling connection between the appearance of the tattoo-like pentagram on the hand of those marked to die by the senseless animalistic violence of the werewolf and those not dissimilarly marked in Hitler's Germany (a fact well known to the refugee Siodmak, but not common coin with the American moviegoing public of 1941). Nevertheless, *THE WOLF MAN* is first and foremost an entertainment—an horrific fairy tale that takes place in a proper fairy tale world. The film is meant to be exciting and fun (albeit fun with a downbeat ending), not a lesson. Doubtless, this is what Universal most wanted, if for no other reason than the studio had no desire to court the wrath of the censors and the guardians of morality as the Laemmles had done by accident in the thirties.

Nor was Universal terribly interested in being especially cerebral, which is likely why none of the Universal Horrors of the forties were in the hands of such visionary directors as James Whale or Robert Florey or Edgar G. Ulmer or Tod Browning. Instead, the projects were given over to men who, at their best, were talented craftsmen—Arthur Lubin, Christy Cabanne, William Nigh, Erle C. Kenton, Roy William Neill, Ford Beebe, and, for *THE WOLF MAN*, George Waggner. (A case could be made that Edward Dmytryk was in a different league, but since he was handed one of the studio's silliest and least successful projects, 1943's *CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN*, there's more absurdity and stock shots than vision in his entry.) A former actor, songwriter, screenwriter, and occasional producer, Waggner seems more a dilettante who just wanted to be in the movies than a filmmaker with anything in particular to say. Waggner's approach to film was slick, stylish, and clever, exactly the right tone for *THE WOLF MAN*—and he'd certainly established his bonafides for the project with *MAN MADE MONSTER* and *HORROR ISLAND* earlier that same year. With the help of the brilliant Universal technicians and the studio's standing sets, Waggner crafted a fine little film that he kept moving at a nice pace, just the right touch of atmosphere. Perhaps he worked too fast and was a little too cavalier with some of the small details. A more meticulous director would probably have avoided the unintentionally risible moment when the Wolf Man, after his first transformation, daintily and fastidiously hikes his pants legs up as he sets out on his murderous foray! Similarly, a more careful craftsman might have questioned whatever would possess a snarling beast to invariably change into the janitor uniform that the Wolf Man prefers for his evenings of mayhem. Waggner merely accepts, and

since he's working in a genre requiring the viewer's own suspension of disbelief, it matters little. His own lack of concern may in fact strengthen the film's sense of conviction.

Seeing *THE WOLF MAN* on DVD isn't as much of a revelation as seeing some of the other titles Universal has released. Many of the TV prints fans were subjected to over the years may not have been pristine, but neither were they disgraceful, as very much was the case with many of the earlier films. Even so, this remastered transfer does present a beautiful copy of *THE WOLF MAN*. From the minute the sparkingly clear and sharp "New Universal" lucite globe with its whirling stars appears on the screen, the viewer realizes that this is as close as he's ever likely to get to seeing the film as it was presented when it was brand new. On this level alone, the DVD release is a must-have and isn't going to disappoint collectors of Universal Horrors.

And this is a good thing, because the extras this time around are sadly wanting. No one expected a major discovery such as the missing—apparently lost—bear-wrestling scene, but the documentary is quite the least involved and involving of any of the titles released so far. The choice of John Landis as host/narrator is a curious one (wouldn't Joe Dante, whose 1981 *THE HOWLING* even included scenes from *THE WOLF MAN*, have been a better choice?), and while it's been previously noted that there's been too much sameness to the documentaries' overreliance on the Usua. Suspects as genre experts, this one is missing even most of those! In other documentaries we've been treated to survivors from the era, or at least their descendants. The best we get here are clips of an interview with Curt Siodmak. Where is Ron Chaney to discuss his grandfather's most famous and defining role? There's a distinct sense of this one being rushed in its creation, with evidence of a lackadaisical attitude about the entire project. (The following year's *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN* is mentioned as being made before *THE WOLF MAN*. So savvy and insightful a film historian as David Skal knows better.) The most pleasing aspect of the documentary is a discussion of the film's score by musicians John Morgan and Bill Stromberg, who as arranger and conductor have recreated and recorded the classic Universal scores for Marco Polo. It's a pity they weren't given more time. Universal is on to a good thing, an important thing, with these DVD releases of their horror films, but it looks more and more like they're about to drop the ball. The excitement and completely deserved praise that greeted the DVD of *FRANKENSTEIN* (1931) is worlds away from what is going on with *THE WOLF MAN*. Sure, they've given us a good transfer of the film itself, and, yes, they've got a presold audience in those of us who already love these movies, but they're wrong if they expect their increasingly slipshod approach to effectively broaden that audience.



# Crimson Chronicle

by Forrest J. Ackerman



Even a Curt who has fur in heart  
And slays some bears by night  
May become a flirt when three rivers  
meet  
And the moon's afoul at night.

This prophetic rhyme by Nostradamus has just been unearthed in Three Rivers, California, the hilly hideaway home of the world famous author of *Donovan's Brain* and *THE WOLF MAN*, who resides in solitary splendor in a spacious cabin atop a tree-covered mountain where all manner of wild life roams free: pheasants ... raccoons ... bears.

Curt Siodmak (pronounced See-ow-d-mahk), 98, with the 98-year-young wife Henrietta, the love partner of his life

Each night the legendary German-born sci-fi icon stands on the verge of the canyon beside his eyrie and shouts across the chasm, "Heil Hitler! Thanks for making me unwelcome in the Fatherland so I came to this New World of America that welcomed me and made me famous beyond my youthhood dreams!" Yes, Siodmak sensed the Nazification of Germany and left the impending horrors of Hitler along with Peter Lorre, Fritz Lang, Francis Lederer, Marlene Dietrich, Josef von Sternberg, and other cinematic celebrities.

In July 1926, in *Amazing Stories*, I read the translation from German of Siodmak's "The Eggs from Lake Tanganyika"

In 1939, while an employee of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (I was behind the scenes guarding the Oscars as they were handed out to *GONE WITH THE WIND*),

I discovered the telephone number in Hollywood of the "Egg Man" and phoned him and intro-

duced myself. Shortly thereafter, we met and I surprised him by giving him a copy of the 1926 collectors item featuring his story. He was not aware that Hugo Gernsback, "The Father of Science Fiction," had published it, and we became fast friends ever after.

Early on, he introduced me to his wife and she told me a fascinating tale of how they first met. "When we were young teenagers, we attended a Masked Ball, neither knowing the other. At the time, I lived with my mother in an apartment and I came in a gown dressed as a butterfly. A handsome young man got the big eye for me, as they say today in American slang, and signed me up for all the dances. I won the first prize, which was enough money to pay the rent for a whole year! It was a large wad of paper money and I had no pockets in my disguise, so this young man gallantly offered to hold the money for me.

"He took me home in a taxi—my first ride and a thrill for me—and, as he let me out in front of my apartment, he made a little move on me to get a hug or a kiss. I was naive and frustrated and kind of pushed him away with my calling card—the luckiest act of my life.

"When I got inside, I gushed, 'Oh, Mother, I won the First Prize and met the most marvelous young man!' 'Never mind the young man,' said my mother, 'where is the money?' I turned pale! A year's rent gone with a stranger! 'Well, you'll never see him again!' predicted my mother."

But the next night, Curt was back with the flowers, the candy, the money ... and they lived happily ever after.

Lovely love story, nicht wahr?

We've traveled around the world together, the Siodmaks and I. Somewhere in Europe, we visited a Dinosaur Park and Curt liberally photographed me with lifesize models, photos featured in my magazine *Wonderama*. He and I and Ray Harryhausen were interviewed together somewhere in Italy, where a number of props from my imagi-movie collection were being displayed for two weeks. Later, we were together in my wife's birthplace, Frankfurt-am-Main in Germany, and she and the Siodmaks were secretly amused at how they were being treated like royalty when once they were personae non gratae before the War.

I was together with Curt in Berlin the night of the premiere of the Moroder version of *METROPOLIS*. Gustav Froelich, the young son of the Master of *Metropolis*

in the film, was on the stage. I sat next to one of the Children of *Metropolis*, then a man in his seventies, and he saw the film for the first time—because, altho he had acted in it, he had been too young to be allowed to see it! He saw his little sister in it, long dead, because she had a closeup scene with Brigitte "Maria" Helm. Later, Curt told me an amazing story: "Fritz Lang was determined that no unauthorized person should be on the set and leak any information. I was a newspaper reporter at the time, so I got a job as an extra and Fritz had no idea how information was reaching the press! Also, at the climax of the film when you see the dress of Brigitte Helm as the False Maria catch fire, I was one of the volunteers who rushed up and helped put out the fire!"

In 1935, when I was living in San Francisco, I read an ad for a film that sounded fantastic, about an artificial island of steel and glass in mid Atlantic. Of course it was Siodmak's *F.P.1*, filmed in English with Conrad Veidt, in German with Hans (BOMBS OVER MONTE CARLO) Albers and Peter (M) Lorre and in French with Charles (LILION) Boyer. As with *DRACULA*, a Spanish version was recorded, but I have never had any information about the stars.

Here are a couple of amusing anecdotes concerning *FLOATING PLATFORM NUMBER ONE DOESN'T ANSWER*. A year or so after its initial showing, I was in a secondhand book and magazine shop and there was a table covered with movie pressbooks. I looked thru every one, hoping to find something fantastic. All mundane movies, until on the bottom, the very last one—jackpot: *F.P.1*! Then many years later, I was in Berlin in the movie theater of Peter Volmann—a dyed-in-the-wolf imagi-mo-

Continued on  
page 77



# FRIGHTVISION®

APRIL 6 - 8, 2001



"IT'S COMING BACK -  
to the Rock and Roll  
Hall of Fame City -  
CLEVELAND, OHIO!"



**Sheraton  
Cleveland City Centre  
HOTEL**

777 St. Clair Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44114

Call (216)771-7600 or (800)321-10  
Special "FrightVision" Rates Available  
BOOK NOW - Rooms and Dealer Space are Going Fast

## STARRING . . . "LOST IN SPACE"

Bill Mumy  
June Lockhart  
Angela Cartwright  
Marta Kristen  
Mark Goddard  
Guy Williams, Jr.  
Bob May

appearing with the SF Robot  
Builder's Club

Special Thanks to Ray Dutczak & "LISMemories"

Dick Warlock:  
Halloween's Michael Myers  
Tom Morga:  
Friday the 13th's Jason  
R.A. Mihailoff:  
Texas Chainsaw Massacre's Leatherface

## HORROR HOST EXTRAVAGANZA

with:

Dr. Shock (Toledo)  
Dr. Creep (Dayton)  
Dr. Mor B.S. (Fort Wayne)  
Spooky Spectre (Pittsburgh)  
Billy Block (Columbus)

(with more to come)

## PERFORMING LIVE MANIMALS

KING DAPPER COMBO

## "STAR TREK"

JAMES DOOHAN  
"Scotty"  
GRACE LEE WHITNEY  
"Janice Rand"

LOU FERRIGNO  
"The Incredible Hulk"  
VERONICA CARTWRIGHT  
"Aliens" & "The X-Files"

BEN CHAPMAN  
"The Creature from the Black Lagoon"  
DON STROUD  
"Mike Hammer" & "The Buddy Holly Story"  
DAVID NAUGHTON

"An American Werewolf in London"  
TED A. BOHUS  
"SPFX" Magazine, Producer/Director  
BRINKE STEVENS

"Hunting Fear" & "Nightmare Sisters"  
LINNEA QUIGLEY  
"Pumpkinhead 2" & "Nightmare on Elm St."

BARBARA LEIGH  
The Original "VAMPIRELLA"  
ROXANNA MARTIN  
"Witchblade" & "Tomb Raider"

STEVE STEVENS  
Walt Disney Studio Star  
COUNTESS VLADIMIRA

## "BEWITCHED" Kasey Rogers

By Special Arrangement with  
"Scarlet Street" Magazine

## "Kolchak: THE NIGHT STALKER"

Jack Grinnage  
Carol Ann Susi

By Special Arrangement with Mark Davidich

## SAVINI-THON

featuring:

TOM SAVINI  
and His Films & SPFX

Cortlandt Hull  
(Nephew of Henry Hull)  
with memorabilia from  
"The Werewolf of  
London"

ALSO:

Huge Dealer's Rooms  
Masquerade Contest  
Continuous Movies  
Modeling Contest  
Q&A/Panel Discussions  
(Hosted by "Scarlet Street" Magazine's  
Very Own Richard Valley)

Stay Tuned . . .  
There's Much Much More to Come!!

CONVENTION  
HOURS:

Friday  
(TBA)  
Saturday  
10am-7pm  
Sunday  
10am-5pm

Check the  
Website for  
Admission  
Prices and  
Special  
Weekend &  
Children's  
Rates.

Sponsored  
by:

DEPT OF TRAIN &  
HOBBY  
SOUTHEAST  
HARLEY DAVISON  
TLC LIQUOR &  
WINE  
BOUTIQUE

For 25 Years  
Creating Memories  
The FrightVision Official Printer  
CYNDY'S  
COPY & PRINT  
CENTER  
200 West Main St.  
Ravenna, OH 44129

And by  
THE RASCAL  
HOUSE

FOR  
MORE  
INFO  
FrightVision  
P.O. Box 347  
Ravenna, OH  
44129

OR CALL  
(330)297-54

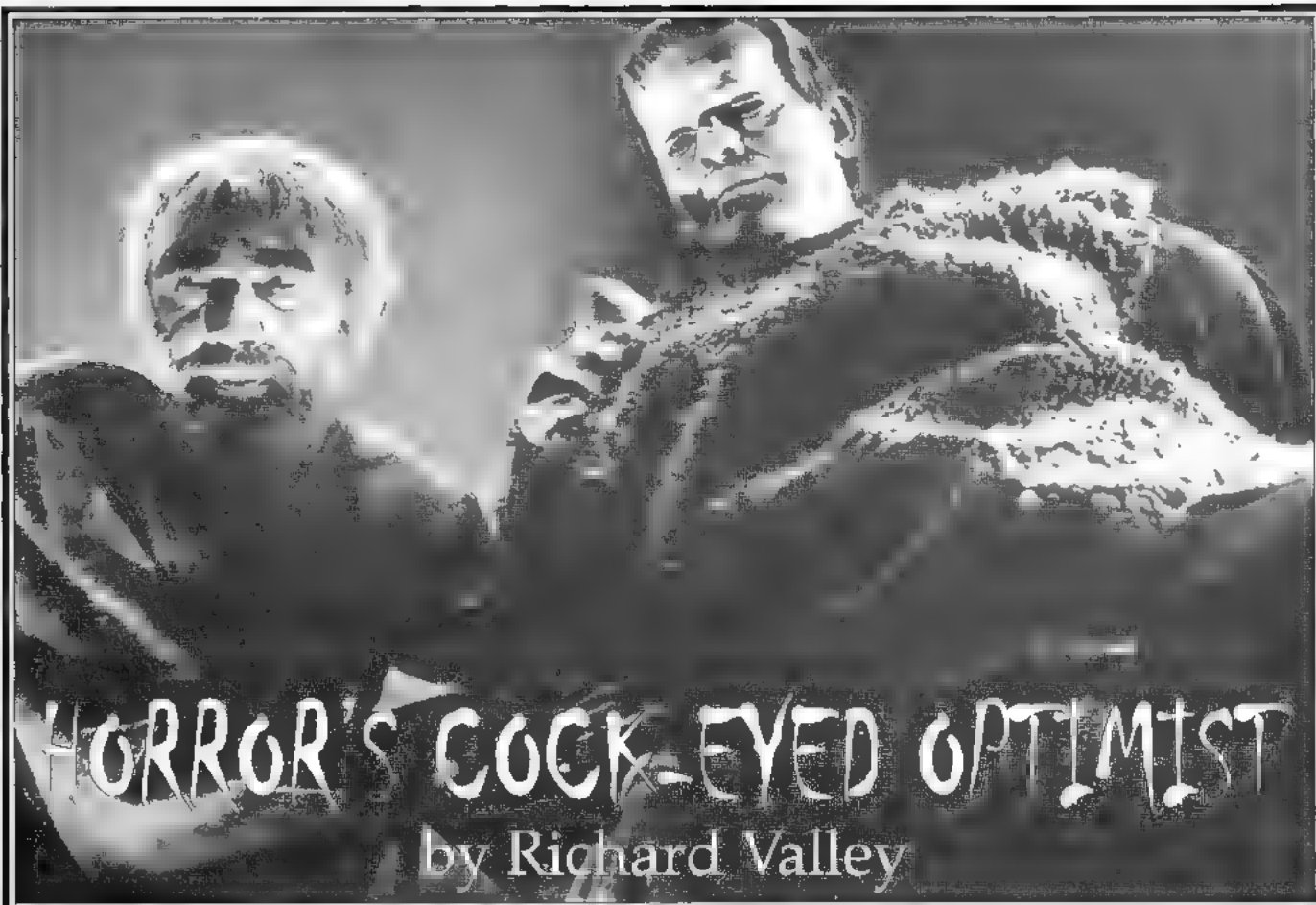
Check the  
Website for  
Updates,  
Contests,  
Giveaways,  
Events and  
More!

Carl Thompson  
Owner/Promoter

www.frightvisioncon.com

(All Guest  
Appearances  
Subject to  
Change)





# HORROR'S COCK-EYED OPTIMIST

by Richard Valley

Forget Nellie Forbush, that hack nurse from Little Rock, Arkansas, in James Michener's *Tales From the South Pacific* (1947) and Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein's Broadway and Hollywood musical *SOUTH PACIFIC* (1949 and 1958). Nurse Nellie may have tried to pass herself off as "A Cock-eyed Optimist," but her grim, tight-lipped behavior belied her words. She spent most of WWII troubled by her latent, homegrown bigotry and confused over whether to marry a Frenchman who had once committed murder. Life for Nellie was anything but a bowl of cherries—that is, except for the pits!

Truth to tell, Nellie was nowhere near as pleasant a party person as a certain jolly, joking, happy-go-lucky soul who actually lived in the pits—or next to one, anyway, in a cave! The jocular gent in question is the much-maligned Ygor, one of the leading lights of Universal's biographical films *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1939) and *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1942), and a comical character who took part—or, more accurately, one who had part of him take part—in *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN* (1943) and each subsequent film in the celebrated series.

To say that poor old Ygor led a difficult existence is putting much the best face on his troublesome history, but did he ever let life's cruel caprices get him down? No! Here was a man who always whistled a happy tune—or rather, blew one on his ever-handly hooter. Here was a man, a blacksmith by trade, a friend to lame horses, who'd been unjustly hanged for grave-robbing in the service of Dr. Henry Frankenstein. Had Ygor committed such vile atrocities? Certainly not! We know from the evidence presented in *FRANKENSTEIN* (1931) and *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1935) that it was a sadistic, whip-wielding bungler named Fritz who served Frankenstein neither wisely nor too well when the neurotic young medico put together his "perfect man." We know further that, after Fritz's timely death, he was replaced by an untidy murderer named Karl, a man

employed by an effete snob named Septimus Pretorius. Why, nowhere is there the slightest evidence that Ygor ever deserted hammer and anvil to pick up spade and shovel in the service of Frankenstein's unholy science. Nowhere!

The cynical among us may well wonder where Henry Frankenstein was when this guileless gentleman was unfairly pilloried. Did he step forward and say, "Hold, good citizens of Frankenstein! Hold, you've got the wrong man! This is neither Fritz, who was strangled with his own lash by my creation, nor Karl, who was flung from the roof of my tower laboratory for no discernible reason! This is the good Ygor, industrious blacksmith and second horn in the village orchestra!" No, he did not. He said nothing. Instead, he was off on an Alp somewhere, honeymooning with a woman named Elizabeth, whom he had hastily wed when rumors began to spread about his late-night activities with a little man and a whip.

Thus it came to pass that Ygor was hanged for crimes against nature for which he was wholly innocent—but this is all, in Hollywoodeze, "back story." Let's pick up the narrative as it was dramatized by such noteworthy scenarists as Willis Cooper, Scott Darling, and Curt Siodmak for Universal Pictures. Here we find Ygor (played by Bela "Dracula" Lugosi in an Oscar-worthy performance) relating his tale to Wolf von Frankenstein (played by Basil "Sherlock Holmes" Rathbone as though overdosed on amphetamines). Wolf is Henry's firstborn son, who, doubtless advised by Erich von Stroheim or Harry von Zell, has foolishly sought to distance himself from the family name by the addition of a meaningless "von." Says the blacksmith:

"They hanged me once, Frankenstein. They broke my neck. They said I was dead. Then they cut me down."

"Hanged you?" Wolf, who obviously hasn't fully grasped the concept of tact, asks. "Why did they hang you?"

"Because I stole bodies—they said. They threw me in here, long ago. They wouldn't bury me in holy place, like

churchyard, because I stole bodies—they said. So—Ygor is dead!”

With this remark, the plucky blacksmith reveals an impressive knowledge of literature and its purveyors, specifically Samuel “Mark Twain” Clemens and his famous quip that “the reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated.” With the skill of a born wag, Ygor goes Clemens one better by agreeing with those who have pronounced him *ad patres*. (Admittedly, he somewhat spoils the effect by laughing at his own joke.)

When Wolf idly mentions that mending the blacksmith’s busted neck is beyond his expertise—it’s much more complicated than breathing life into a stitched-together corpse, it seems—Ygor gives the first significant clue to his effervescent optimism. Does he sneer in contempt and proclaim, “Look, here, if it wasn’t for your miserable dick of a daddy, I wouldn’t have this neck!” No, he simply, calmly explains, “Nobody can fix Ygor’s neck. It’s all right”—and then, to prove it, he cheerfully gives a few knocks on his practically petrified nape!

It’s been argued that Wolf’s harsh treatment of Ygor in *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* is born of jealousy over the blacksmith’s close alliance with Wolf’s half-brother, the Frankenstein Monster (Boris “Frankenstein Monster” Karloff). It’s true that, in the reactivated grab-bag of body parts that is the Monster, Ygor found his life’s companion—(“He . . . does things for me,” Ygor remarks enigmatically)—but what was the nature of the relationship? Barring photographic evidence of the pair parked in a lonely lane, or the unearthing of tear-stained love letters tied with a ribbon, we can but speculate as to whether the alliance found physical expression on those lonely nights by the sulphur pit.

What cannot be denied is that Wolf von Frankenstein strove mightily to rid himself of Ygor at every turn, going so far as to callously accuse him of the murder of the family butler, Benson (Edgar Norton). This was an especially dangerous and desperate measure, since the bulk of the evidence fingered Wolf’s five-year-old son, Peter (Donnie Dunagan), as the true killer (Benson’s body was discovered in a secret passage adjoining little Peter’s nursery bedroom, and the butler’s gold watch was found in the young boy’s possession.) When this gambit failed, Wolf, with the full cooperation of the long—and, in the case of Inspector Krogh (Lionel “Pinkie” Atwill), false—arm of the law, pumped the blacksmith’s body full of bullets, killing him . . .

Or so he thought

Lynched, shot—Ygor nevertheless bounced back, retaining the sunny disposition that even Pollyanna lost after

no more than a crippling fall from a tree. Presumed dead at the close of *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*, Ygor is alive and tooting in the opening moments of *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN*, having outlived Wolf’s treachery and even found time to visit the local tailor and orthodontist. Still, he’s smiling through his tears (but *what a smile!*), for his beloved Monster has tumbled to his doom in the sulphur pit, which has subsequently dried up after untold centuries of parboiling the local health enthusiasts

But wait! Through a fortuitous string of circumstances,

the Monster (here played by Lon “Larry Talbot” Chaney Jr.) is freed from the pit! This miracle is inadvertently accomplished through the suggestion of a grumpy bumpkin that Castle Frankenstein be dynamited. (It should be noted that said bumpkin bore a striking resemblance to the late Fritz and Karl, hunting at a blood feud with the Ygor family that bears further investigation. Universal Pictures incorporated this knowledge into their films, casting the same actor—Dwight “Renfield” Frye—in all three roles.) The ensuing explosions crack wide the hardened sulphur, revealing the dead-white but still *longaevus* form of the Frankenstein fiend Ygor, his face positively aglow with joy, pulls the Monster free, gives him a light dusting, and delivers perhaps the rosiest line of his career

“The sulphur—it was *good* for you, wasn’t it? It preserved you!”

Has anyone, in the long, checkered history of mankind, ever matched this humble smith for sheer, unadulterated bonhomie? To tell a man, even a prefab man, that a 30-foot drop into fiery, bubbling sulphur, followed by years of tedious petrification and a sudden, ear-splitting cacophony, was actually *good* for him—that’s (from the Yiddish) chutzpah!

Though his convivial persona is best suited to the hustle and bustle of the metropolis, Ygor immediately suggests fresh air and sunshine as a welcome change from indurate sulphur and total destruction. (“Come! We go to the country! Better country than death!”) Taking no time even to pack a picnic lunch, Ygor helps his befuddled friend out of the rubble and into the suburbs, putting the village of Frankenstein forever behind him.

In *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*, we learned that the Monster had suffered trauma when struck by a thunderbolt. “It happened one night,” says Ygor, betraying his

fondness for Frank Capra. “He was—hunting.” (It’s been suggested that the blacksmith had forced his companion to slaughter those villagers who’d sentenced him to the rope, but Universal slyly put the lie to such slander by casting the same two actors who played the victims in *SON*—namely, Michael Mark and Lionel Belmore—as *living* members of



Page 34: Ygor (Bela Lugosi) with his close friend, the Frankenstein Monster (Boris Karloff), await a visit from the *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1939). ABOVE: Ygor and the Monster (Lon Chaney Jr.) take a midnight stroll—because midnight strolls are “good for you”—in *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1942).



**LEFT:** Ever solicitous of others, Ygor cautions Wolf von Frankenstein (Basil Rathbone) not to harm Wolf's "brother," the Frankenstein Monster. Family butler Benson (Edgar Norton), never kind to the blacksmith or his fur-vested friend, was later murdered under mysterious circumstances. **RIGHT:** His efforts to reunite the embattled Frankenstein family unappreciated, Ygor is riddled with bullets by Wolf and cradled by his longtime companion, the Monster.

the town council in its sequel!) In *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN*, the Monster is again an anthropomorphic lightning rod, and this time Ygor refuses to let it get the big guy down:

"The lightning—it is good for you!"

Sulphur, lightning (or "lightening" as Ygor puts it, seeking through word association to "lighten" the vicissitudes of electrocution), shooting, hanging—one begins to wonder what Ygor's outlook might be were it suggested the Monster be trussed up for dissection. It's a question whose answer isn't long coming! Like Bing and Bob before them, Ygor and the Monster travel the road to danger, and arrive not in Zanzibar, not in Morocco, but in the sleepy little hamlet of Vasaria . . .

Here we discover Henry Frankenstein's youngest son, Ludwig (Sir Cedric "Dr. Livingstone" Hardwicke), shingle in place and trying in vain to mask his familial connection to that side of the Frankenstein family. (So stressful are Ludwig's efforts to bury the past that he looks fully 10 years

older than elder sibling Wolf, and has bags under his eyes large enough to hold a complete wardrobe, shoes included.) Alas for good intentions, the nut never falls far from the tree, and once the Monster hits town Ludwig sets out to perform his own unholy experiment—undoing his father's sins, he believes, by taking Pop's creation apart, piece by piece!

Ah, but he hasn't reckoned with Ygor! The compassionate blacksmith doesn't want his chum turned, like Bad Bad Leroy Brown, into "a jigsaw puzzle with a couple of pieces gone." Instead, he begs Ludwig to help the Monster, and argues, "Besides his sick brain, he has a sick body. You can make him well, Frankenstein." Thanks to Ygor's gentle exhortations, the haggard sawbones reluctantly reconsiders.

Ygor's pleas on behalf of his comrade are rendered all the more poignant by his suffering at the hands of the Monster in *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN*. The years trapped in sulphur have done nothing for the Monster's temper, and, perhaps anticipating behavioral patterns learned dur-

**LEFT:** Having survived Wolf von Frankenstein's fury, poor Ygor's heart was almost broken when the Monster threw him over for a young hussy, Cloestine Hussman (Janet Ann Gallow). So outrageous were Cloestine's efforts that, as pictured here in *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN*, she took to traveling through the village of Vasaria with her bedding. **RIGHT:** Happily, Ygor and the Monster (Bela Lugosi) were brought together again for all time at the conclusion of *GHOST*, via the insertion of Ygor's brain in the Monster's skull. In this photo from *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN* (1943), "they" welcome guests to their humble home.







**Ygor and the Frankenstein Monster—together at last!**

ing his eventual encounter with two baggage clerks in La Mirada, Florida, the big lug repeatedly shoves his little pal around: first during the storm, later when Ygor tries to save him from the effects of a fetid gas unleashed by Ludwig (the less said the better), and finally in an argument over a young a very young—woman!

Proving beyond doubt that the wicked wiles of a femme fatale know no age, the hussy who comes between Ygor and the Monster is five-year-old Cloestine Hussman (Janet Ann Gallow), in her own quiet way as sly a devil as the murderous Peter von Frankenstein—with whom, it is rumored, she later hooked up for a series of daring “Bonnie and Clyde” robberies in the neighboring township of Riegelberg. As dramatized in *GHOST*, Cloestine contrives to “meet cute” with the Monster by suggestively asking him to go fetch a ball. Within days of his advent in Vasaria, the smitten Monster has determined that it is Cloestine, not Ygor, with whom he wants to sing his September Song, and he demands this be accomplished not through the sanctity of marriage, but by the placing of Cloestine’s crafty brain in his great big empty skull.

But Ygor is one never to say die—even if it kills him! Not only does he try to dissuade the Monster from his misguided plan and save the life of his prepubescent rival, but he hits on a solution, a happy inspiration so typical of the man, that will unite the two companions forever.

“Ygor has a better idea. You ll see. You will have the brain of your friend, Ygor. Tonight my brain will be your brain!”

Oddly, the idea holds little appeal for the Monster. He shoves the blacksmith aside, but Ygor is not to be deterred. “Tonight, Ygor will die for you!”

And that is exactly what Ygor does, assisted by the Monster, who at last sees the wisdom of Ygor’s scheme and helps his friend on his way by immediately crushing him behind a door. Though in some little pain over the experience, the broken, crippled, and distorted old blacksmith couldn’t be happier! It remains only to persuade Ludwig Frankenstein to officiate at the “wedding,” but, with the skillful aid of a distinguished surgeon named Bohmer (Lionel “Here I Am Again” Atwill), who joins the blacksmith in playing a merry prank of brain switching, the deed is accomplished. As Ygor explains it to Bohmer (or “Bulbur” as he sometimes calls him, a lighthearted play on the word “bulbous,” which Bohmer certainly is), shortly before going under the knife, “Better death than a life like this, now that I have seen the promise of a life forever . . .”

With his friend, he has no need to add. With him

And so it came to pass that Ygor and the Frankenstein Monster were united and became as one, to the point that, within a few short years of the experiment, the Monster even began to look like the blacksmith, if not speak like him. (Sad to say, Dr. Bohmer was a bit of a screw-up, and by slightly botching the operation deprived the Ygor Monster of his melodious voice, not to mention his dexterity on the horn.) Their further adventures were chronicled in *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN*, *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1944), *HOUSE OF DRACULA* (1945), and *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* (1948), and certainly they were not without tragedy (necessitating frequent medical care, and again thanks to Bohmer’s blunders, the occasional visit to the oculist). But rest assured that Ygor faced them with a smile on his—well, his brain—and that the Monster was, as the ebullient blacksmith himself so warmly put it, “the first time happy in his life.”

# Casa Video

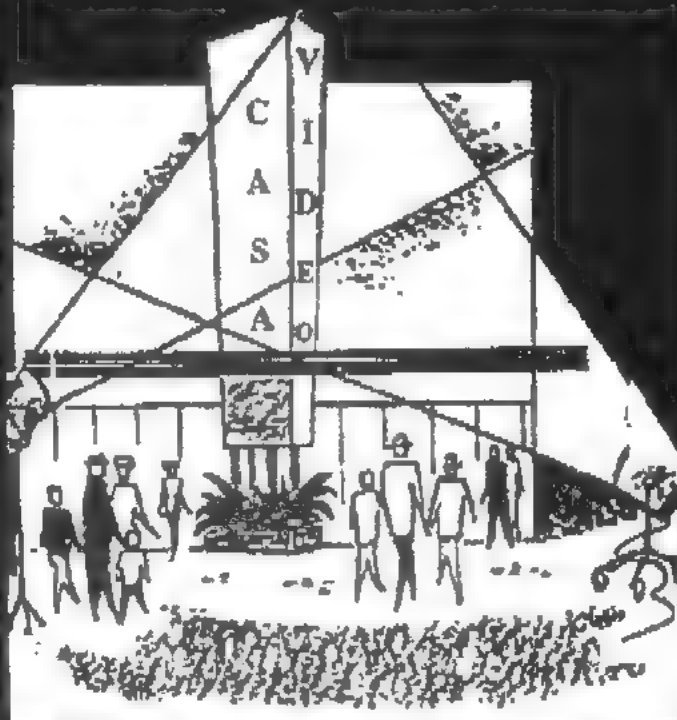
Your Home for Classics, Foreign  
and the Hard-to-Find

## Mail Order Rental!

Over 23,000 titles  
Over 3,000 DVDs  
and lasers

3 titles  
1 week  
\$21 ppd

[www.casavideo.com](http://www.casavideo.com)



2905 East Speedway  
Tucson, AZ 85716  
1-888-976-1800

## THE X-FILES: SEASON ONE

20th Century Fox, \$149.98

When previews for the X-FILES pilot began airing in mid-1993, I was unimpressed with the cheesy TV spots, visions of TWIN PEAKS MEET SCOOBY DOO dancing in my head, so I didn't bother watching. Catching the Season Two finale nearly two years later, I realized I'd been missing something (For one thing, at no point did anyone yell, "Zoinks!") Now, after seven strong seasons, the show is one of the staples of TV suspense, boasting an international fan base numbering in the millions.

At long last, Fox has begun their definitive release of THE X-FILES, replacing their previous, disappointingly incomplete "Best of" releases on VHS and laserdisc. This seven-DVD set delivers the entirety of Season One, from pilot to finale, with a few extras thrown in, at a more-than-fair price. The story can now be viewed as a whole, rather than merely the sum of its episodic vignettes, and one may gain greater appreciation for the ambitious brainchild of creator Chris Carter (interviewed in *Scarlet Street* #16, back when we jumped on the X-FILES bandwagon before any other genre publication).

The series follows the adventures of Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson), two star-crossed sleuths who represent the special branch of the FBI known as the X-Files, originally established for cases unexplained and paranormal. (Presumably, these files include photos of J. Edgar Hoover in drag, but that's another story...) Scully, a medical doctor and FBI Academy instructor, is assigned to investigate (read: debunk) the notorious "Spooky" Mulder's obsessive, unassigned work on the nearly-forgotten X-File cases. Initially focusing on the monolithic, government-driven UFO conspiracy that serves as the meat of the series' mythos, the plotlines frequently—and, as a single-minded UFO quest would be hard-pressed to sustain itself for long, wisely—branch off to mysteries of a more terrestrial nature.

Far more hit than miss, this first season was a strong foundation for the se-

ries to build on, introducing us to several compelling characters: The Cigarette-Smoking Man (William B. Davis), an enigmatic government official involved in the highest levels of conspiracy, a government-policing trio of cybergeeks who call themselves The Lone Gunmen (Bruce Harwood, Dean Haglund, and Tom Braidwood), Deep Throat (Jerry Hardin), another conspiracy participant, suspiciously forthcoming with top-secret information, Assistant Director Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi), brought in to rein Scully back into line and who would later become a pivotal character in the series.

Surprisingly, the best episodes are not necessarily those focusing on flying saucers. Though the UFO-themed pilot and finale are both excellent episodes, the real gems lie in-between: in the ultra-paranoid "Ice," inspired by THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD (1951), the agents are sent into the remote arctic to investigate the sudden loss of contact with a deep-core research team, and discover more than just frozen water. "Squeeze" and its late-season followup, "Tooms," feature the terrifying Eugene Victor Tooms (Doug Hutchison), a genetic aberration who awakens from hibernation every 30 years to feed on the livers of humans (These two chillers comfortably stand alongside the best tales from KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER, cited by Chris Carter as a major inspiration for the series, and here at *Scarlet Street* we still think Tooms should make at least one more appearance.) Mulder and Scully chase after genetically-enhanced murderers in "Eve" (played by twins Erika and Sabrina Kreivins as children, the remarkable Harriet Harris as adults), a warped tale of cloning and motherhood. "Gender Bender" leads the duo to an isolated, Amishlike cult of pheromone-producers, who just might be doppelgangers, to boot (Nicholas Lea, Mulder's nemesis Krychek in later seasons, appears as a different character in this episode, one whose macho posturings are dampened when the woman with whom he's been getting hot and heavy turns into a man.)

In "Roland," a cryogenically frozen, Donovanesque brain psychically manipulates a mentally-challenged janitor (Zeljko Ivanek) to its own evil means. And in what is perhaps the most successful story of the season, Scully's die-hard skepticism is shaken when a death row inmate (the very chilling Brad Dourif) seemingly begins to channel the spirit of her recently-deceased father (Don Davis) in "Beyond the Sea."

# INSIDE THE X FILES

Other notable investigations concern

A 1 gone awry ("Ghost in the Machine"), killer bugs ("Darkness Falls"), pyrokinesis ("Fire"), lycanthropes ("Shapes"), reincarnation ("Born Again") and faith healing ("Miracle Man"). There are some misfires, particularly "Young at Heart" and "The Jersey Devil," but even they stem from intriguing premises, and are worth at least a viewing. All in all, this set is a must for true X-philes, and eclectic enough to include a little something for everyone.

As for the 20th Century Fox DVD presentation, the episodes truly have never looked better—every detail in this darkly lit world becomes as clear as it ever will. Bundled in a handsome, slipcased, seven-panel foldout the packaging itself must fall into the "prettier than useful" category, as it's rather awkward to unfold the whole thing to get to a single disc (A book-style packaging would have been the friendlier choice.) The 24 episodes are spread across six discs, with the seventh containing the supplements of an 11 minute documentary, Chris Carter discussing 12 of his favorite episodes, 12 promos from the FX channel, a plethora of Fox TV spots, two deleted scenes from the pilot, a special effects clip, and a DVD-ROM game. The supplements are fine, though one yearns for more of those deleted scenes that surely must exist. Or to put it another way, the truth is out there...

—Tony Strauss

**Fox Mulder and Dana Scully (David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson) have met such peculiar adversaries as Luther Lee Boggs (Brad Dourif) and Eugene Victor Tooms (Doug Hutchison).**



# Hot Horrific Fun In The SUMMERTIME!



AVAILABLE JULY 25TH!

## THE UNDERTAKER AND HIS PALS

A MACABRE STORY OF TWO  
MOTORCYCLE-RIDING, KNIFE-  
WIELDING, SHIV SHAVING,  
ARM-TWISTING, CHAIN-LASHING,  
SCALPEL-FLASHING, ACID-THROWING,  
GUN-SHOOTING, BONE BREAKING,  
PATHOLOGICAL NUTS AND  
THEIR PAL  
THE UNDERTAKER...

**\$19.99**  
DVD

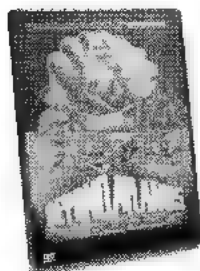
AVAILABLE NOW!



## TWILIGHT PEOPLE

FEATURING  
CULT-QUEEN  
PAM GRIER IN AN  
EDDIE ROMERO  
MONSTERHON

**\$19.99**  
DVD



AVAILABLE NOW!

**Beyond Atlantis**  
Wild sex rituals  
beneath the sea!  
From Eddie Romero

**\$19.99**  
DVD



**COMING  
AUGUST  
29TH**

GORG  
SPECIAL EDITION

**\$24.99**  
DVD



BUCK  
ROGERS  
12 OUT OF  
THIS  
WORLD  
CHAPTERS

**\$29.99**  
DVD

## MORE FAR-OUT THRILLS AND CHILLS ON DVD

ALSO AVAILABLE ON VHS



**DARK  
STAR**

**\$29.99**  
DVD



**THE BIRD  
WITH THE  
CRYSTAL  
PLUMAGE**

**\$24.99**  
DVD



**KILL  
BABY...  
KILL!**

**\$24.99**  
DVD



**CHILDREN  
SHOULDN'T  
PLAY WITH  
DEAD  
THINGS**

**\$24.99**  
DVD



**DEVIL'S  
RAIN**

**\$24.99**  
DVD



**DON'T  
LOOK IN  
THE  
BASEMENT**

**\$19.99**  
DVD



**GARGOYLES**

**\$24.99**  
DVD



**THE  
NIGHT  
VISITOR**

**\$24.99**  
DVD



AVAILABLE WHEREVER VIDEO AND DVD ARE SOLD, OR CALL  
1-800-331-4077, OR VISIT US ON LINE AT "vcihomevideo.com"





# THE MAN WITH THREE BRAINS CURT SIODMAK

*"There is a connection between Aristotle's Poetics and THE WOLF MAN. In the Greek plays, the gods tell a man his fate. I would never have chosen to be born a Jew in Germany. Things happen in our lives, against our will, that we cannot escape. That is the idea behind THE WOLF MAN."*

**B**orn in Dresden in 1902, Curt Siodmak was a publisher writer before he'd hit his teenage years, a reporter in his early twenties, an extra on the set of Fritz Lang's 1926 sci-fi classic METROPOLIS at the age of 24, a screenwriter for F.P.1 DOES NOT ANSWER at the age of 30, and a refugee at the age of 31.

Emigrating to England, Siodmak wrote the screenplay for TRANS-ATLANTIC TUNNEL (1935) and NON-STOP NEW YORK (1937). Arriving in Hollywood in 1937, he helped make a star of Paramount's sarong girl, Dorothy Lamour, with the screenplays for HER JUNGLE LOVE (1938) and ALOMA OF THE SOUTH SEAS (1941). He provided Monogram with one of its rare good screenplays and Boris Karloff with his best role for the company in THE APE (1940). Later, for RKO, Siodmak joined forces with producer Val Lewton to fashion one of the classics of horror-dom: I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE (1943).

For all his success at other studios, it was at Universal that Curt Siodmak delivered his best-loved work, writing the stories or screenplays (or both) for such fantastic films as BLACK FRIDAY (1940), THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS (1940), THE INVISIBLE WOMAN (1940), INVISIBLE AGENT (1942), FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943), SON OF DRACULA (1943), and HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1944). For THE WOLF MAN (1941), Siodmak created the tragically lycanthropic Larry Talbot, who rapidly took his place with Count Dracula and the Frankenstein Monster as one of the most enduring monster icons.

Siodmak also found time to write his most famous novel, *Donovan's Brain* (1942), which found its way onto the screen three times: as THE LADY AND THE MONSTER (1944), DONOVAN'S BRAIN (1953), and THE BRAIN (1964). Among his other non-Universal screenwriting credits: THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS (1946), TARZAN'S MAGIC FOUNTAIN (1949), BRIDE OF THE GORILLA (1951, also as director), MAGNETIC MONSTER (1953, also as director), CREATURE WITH THE ATOM BRAIN (1955), EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS (1956), and SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE DEADLY NECKLACE (1962).

In 1993, at a convention honoring Forrest Ackerman, *Scarlet Street* caught up with Curt Siodmak for the following survey of his far-reaching career . . .

---

## Interview by Kevin G. Shinnick and Terry Pace

---



**Curt Siodmak:** These horror stories have a deeper meaning than many people suspect. They are reminiscent of the German fairy tales. The English ones, too! *Sleeping Beauty*, *Little Red Riding Hood*—the big bad wolf swallowing the girl. Then there's the witch giving *Snow White* the poisoned apple—there's a connection with nature in all these things. You don't have to explain it, because the people see it, the kids see it—instinctively, it touches them. I don't know why, really, but it is in born in the genes, I think. I think we have three brains.

**Scarlet Street:** Yours, mine, and *Donovan's*?

**CS:** (Laughs) You know, I inspired 500 pictures about brains, mostly by people without any!

**SS:** What do you mean, we have three brains?

**CS:** One's primitive, a dinosaur brain—that's the same as we had as cavemen. We have the same cruelty today, maybe more than they had back then. Then we have a social brain—you don't hit me over the head and we talk. If the conversation doesn't go well, then we slip back to the dinosaur brain! But not today—I'm too tired today for that! (Laughs) And then we have a mystical brain—something more than life, more than we can explain satisfactorily. Call it religion or what you will, but it is something deep within us, like the stories that become fairy tales.

**SS:** You've often described *THE WOLF MAN* as a modern fairy tale.

**CS:** Yes. These horror pictures follow the tradition of ancient legends and fairy tales. They are stories that deal with the struggle within the human soul—the

eternal struggle between good and evil that exists in every man. The good is typically represented in human form. The evil is shown in the form of some sort of beast or animal. *THE WOLF MAN* represents a variation on these themes—these ancient stories. Its roots are as old as Greek mythology. The story is much deeper than what you see on the screen. There is a connection between Aristotle's *Poetics* and *THE WOLF MAN*. In the Greek plays, the gods tell a man his fate. I would never have chosen to be born a Jew in Germany. Things happen in our lives, against our will, that we cannot escape. That is the idea behind *THE WOLF MAN*.

**SS:** You obviously delved very deeply into the origins of your character.

**CS:** Horror stories represent the desires and impulses of our subconscious. The *Wolf Man* is perhaps the most complex of all the movie monsters. He is an innocent man cursed by fate. When the moon is full, he changes into a ruthless animal—a wolf that kills other human beings. He knows he is going to kill. That is his destiny. When he returns to human form, he suffers from remorse and wants to repent for his sins. He prays for death to release him from his horrible fate. The character of *The Wolf Man* represents the beast in all of us. His fate is both tragic and inescapable. Without knowing it, I had borrowed the basic structure of a Greek tragedy. The hero cannot escape his fate, he cannot control the beast within himself. He is helpless against the will of the gods. In *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN*, the character is different.

**SS:** In what way?

**CS:** In *THE WOLF MAN*, Larry Talbot doesn't know what is happening to him. In *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN*, he knows and he wants to die. He has a death wish. There was a lot of the real Lon Chaney Jr. in the Larry Talbot of that picture.

**SS:** What was the genesis of *THE WOLF MAN*—the movie, not the character?

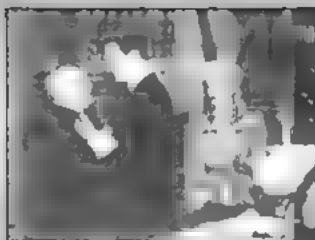
**CS:** The title they got for Boris Karloff. Originally he was supposed to do the picture—it was his title. They told me who was in the cast before I even started writing the script. They said, "We have Lon Chaney Jr., Claude Rains, Ralph Bellamy, Warren William, Maria Ouspenskaya, and Bela Lugosi. We also have a lovely girl, Evelyn Ankers, who can produce a really terrific scream. We have a title, *THE WOLF MAN*, and we shoot in 10 weeks. Start writing!"

**SS:** And you started writing!

**CS:** There are two kinds of writing, of writers. There are the writers who are in it to make the money, like Sidney Sheldon—I know those guys! And there are the writers who must write, who are forced to express ourselves differently in ideas, who try to tell you what *THE WOLF MAN* means in the deepest origins. I try to express it and put it in the story and maybe make some people think about it.

**SS:** In other words, there are writers who simply have to write. They feel compelled to write.

**CS:** There's a young guy that came to my house and he says, "Mr. Siodmak, I want to write a book." I say, "Okay." He says,



PAGE 10: Curt Siodmak sets up a shot for Hammer's *TALES OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1958) PAGE 41. The lighting cameraman is Gert Anderson, the director is Curt Siodmak, and the Monster of *TALES OF FRANKENSTEIN* is Don Megowan. LEFT: John Carradine has created his own monster in *Jon Hall*, and must suffer *THE INVISIBLE MAN'S REVENGE* (1944). CENTER: Peter Lorre cracks up (again!) in *THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS* (1946, with Robert Alda and Andrea King. RIGHT: Lon Chaney Jr. questions Raymond Burr in *BRIDE OF THE GORILLA* (1951) under the watchful gaze of Gisela Werbisek. BELOW: Bela Lugosi in *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN* (1943)

"How can I get an agent? How much money can I make?" Another Sidney Shelton in the making. I showed him all of my books, everything.

SS: Do you have copies of all your screenplays?  
CS: No, I do not! I don't have any of my scripts. I should! Because I didn't take it seriously. My writing, yes, my books—but for the films I never kept anything.

SS: Did your script for *THE WOLF MAN* reach the screen pretty much intact?

CS: I always delivered a script to Universal as close to the shooting date as possible. That discouraged the front office

from interfering with the screenplay. The producer, George Waggner, didn't interfere with me—he wanted my ideas, not his. Also, Universal was stingy. They didn't like to spend money on rewrites, so in those days you stood a good chance of seeing your work reach the screen close to the way you wrote it. That was the secret of creating a classic like *THE WOLF MAN*. The only thing they changed was the character of Larry Talbot. I wrote him as an American mechanic installing a telescope in a Scottish castle. They changed him to the son of an English lord—the character played by Claude Rains. Who would believe Lon Chaney Jr. as the son of an English lord? (Laughs) Other than that, they didn't tamper much with the screenplay. But I will tell you—when you write a werewolf picture, you must consider the bladder.

SS: Beg your pardon?

CS: For the transformations. Lon would be put in position and have to remain there. The cameraman would expose 10 frames of film and then they would make a change to the makeup. Lon had to keep perfectly still, had to keep his eyes focused on one spot. It took six hours to complete his transformation.

Well, what do you do in such a situation when nature calls?

Nothing! (Laughs)

SS: *THE WOLF MAN* was originally planned for Boris Karloff, who never played it. In 1940 Karloff turned down the part of the split-personality professor in *BLACK FRIDAY*.

CS: The dual role I wrote for Karloff, yes, but he chose not to play it. It was far too complex, too intricate, and he was afraid of the level of acting it would involve. He was con-

cerned he wouldn't come off well, so he was smart enough to turn it down. So they got a stage actor, Stanley Ridges, to play the dual role. When that happened, Karloff took the role that was going to be played by Bela Lugosi, and Lugosi ended up playing the smaller role of a gangster which was a big mistake. With that thick Hungarian accent of his, he could never be convincing as an American gangster! It was terrible! Except for playing Dracula, he was not much of an actor.

SS: *THE WOLF MAN* was enormously popular, of course. It put Lawrence Talbot on equal terms with Count Dracula and the Frankenstein Monster.

CS: Audiences during the war flocked to these horror pictures, even while the world was filled with real-life horrors and atrocities. They were looking for a release from the fears of wartime, and they found it in these supernatural tales of ghouls and monsters. They found thrills and excitement and even a sense of hope by escaping into this fantastic fairy-tale world. These pictures are still around today because they were based on imagination and implication. They relied on menace and mystery, not on blood and violence. They are classic tales of fantasy, and they still hold up. Audiences still enjoy them.

SS: Do you still benefit from the creation of so enduring a character?

CS: I received 10 weeks' salary for *THE WOLF MAN*, and it still plays around the world every day. It's on television, on cassette, or even sometimes on the movie screen. Out of this, the writer gets nothing. Do I care? No. Lon Chaney Jr. is dead. George Waggner is dead. Claude Rains is dead. When I look at the credits, everyone else is dead! But I am alive. I am still writing. One night I had a dream. I dreamed that Lon said to me, "Why don't we change places? I'll give you my millions." I declined.

SS: Wasn't your original concept for *THE WOLF MAN* that the audience would never see Larry Talbot as a werewolf? We'd never know if it was all his imagination?

CS: That's right, and that's what I did later when I wrote and directed *BRIDE OF THE GORILLA*, also with Lon Chaney Jr.—although he was not the gorilla or the man who thought he was a gorilla. That was Raymond Burr.



LEFT: I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE (1943) was a welcome break for Curt Siodmak from scripting and providing story ideas for Universal's stable of vampires, werewolves, and man-made monsters. Frances Dee starred, and the zombie shadow is Darby Jones. CENTER: Lon Chaney Jr. was the frequent star of Siodmak's movie concoctions. Here, he menaces Robert Paige in *SON OF DRACULA* (1943), a film directed by Curt's brother and "rival," Robert. RIGHT: The fifties brought sci-fi to the fore as movie monsters took a temporary vacation. *EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS* (1956) united Siodmak and stop-motion master Ray Harryhausen.

SS: Not showing the monster is also the approach that was taken by producer Val Lewton for his RKO film *CAT PEOPLE*.

CS: That was made after *THE WOLF MAN*, of course. It was made because of *THE WOLF MAN*. Val Lewton was very jealous of people who could write. He was a frustrated writer. When I wrote *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* for him, he told me that he had read *Donovan's Brain* and that it wasn't a good book. Then he said it was interesting in the sense of Kant's philosophy, in that it answered the question "Can a brain without a body experience and digest new information?" Of course, I had never even considered Kant when I wrote *Donovan's Brain*.

SS: Speaking of *Donovan's Brain*, do you like any of the three film versions of your novel?

CS: I might! I've never seen them! (Laughs) The first one, they changed the title to *THE LADY AND THE MONSTER*. And they put the scientist in a castle! Herbert Yates, who ran Republic Pictures, said to me I was crazy. I asked him why. He said "You can't make a scientist live in a little house in the desert. He has to live in a castle!" So they had a castle, and they put Erich von Stroheim in this castle in the desert. With Vera Hruba Ralston, who was sleeping with Herbert Yates!

SS: What about the version they made in 1953, with the proper title?

CS: Nancy Davis Reagan was in it. She made Vera look good! (Laughs) Then they did it again in England, and called it *THE BRAIN*. No one got it right.

SS: Your career actually began long before Hollywood, in Germany.

CS: Germany threw me out! England threw me out! France threw me out! America was a country that wanted me and accepted me. Today I live like a king, in a palatial estate on 50 acres overlooking the mountains of California. Every night I look out over the mountains and say "Heil Hitler!" because without that son of a bitch, I would never have come to America! I'd still be in Berlin.

SS: You wrote your life story in *Even a Man Who is Pure in Heart*, a limited edition book in 1997.

CS: I'm writing another book, it will be called *Unfinished Ruminations*. Except I finished it. (Laughs, Actually, I did not. I finished about 500 or 600 pages—and so that's my life. I was in Berlin in 1929. I

was already 27 years old. Five guys of the same age were there—Edgar Ulmer, Fred Zinneman, Billy Wilder was a dancer and a journalist. My brother Robert was a film cutter in the motion pictures, hoping to become a director. Myself, I already had some success, I was already published. We all came to America. Vicki Baum, who wrote *Grand Hotel*—she was there and she came over here. There was a stage play over here that was based on her book. Even Greta Garbo came over, and she wound up starring in the movie of Vicki Baum's book. All the intelligence came over here, and it slowly built up a culture of sorts.

SS: You don't seem to think too much of the "intelligence" you meet nowadays.

CS: Today I had lunch with a young man who was 28, nice, good-looking—but no attention! How can you learn from the past if you can't pay attention? To get the attention of that man, to tell him something I think is important for a young person to know—it's almost impossible. Every two minutes he looked away. I'd away. He cannot concentrate when something that doesn't actually interest him in his life, for himself, is being discussed. This young man knows everything about his job, perfectly. All the fringe benefits around—all the rest of life—he doesn't know. American education is a sad case. Now I ask you, who's the President of Germany?

SS: I haven't a clue!

CS: There you see? Germany—it's in the newspaper every day! People pay no attention. A guy asked me to sign a book of mine. I said "Yes, my name is on it, but I didn't write it." "Oh, you didn't?" "For God's sake, you had the book for years and you never looked at it, never read it, never noticed that I hadn't written it!" Now, we in Europe had a proper education. We had what they call the Gymnasium, which is high school. The last thing you do is called Abitur. It's an examination—Abitur. You write down every goddamn thing you learned since kindergarten—calculus, English, German, history, whatever! Then came college and then they give you a year to sew your oats and have your girlfriends or whatever and have a hell of a good time. Then you start to work again! Here, they don't care much about high school, but as soon as

you go to college they put the pressure on—just at the age where all the hormones are big league and your mind is on other things! In Germany, they gave young people the time to expand themselves sexually or whatever, so that it didn't interfere with work.

SS: Sex first, work later—but doesn't that sound like kids today?

CS: I was asked to speak at a college. I talked about science fiction, the kids were tremendously interested. I walked on campus and in five minutes I couldn't follow their dialogue anymore, couldn't understand what they were talking about!

SS: What is science fiction?

CS: It's an idea. Let's say it's an idea I just wrote. Then you go to the laboratory and work for 20 years and you find out I'm right and you drop the fiction from science! If you cannot prove it, you still have science fiction!

SS: That's certainly a reasonable explanation!

CS: Science fiction is every idea that hasn't been proved to be practical. The greatest science-fiction writer of the world was Nietzsche! So I have a great respect for everybody, but I'm not overawed by people's minds. We all have three brains—or to put it better, three parts to our brains. Depends on how you use them!

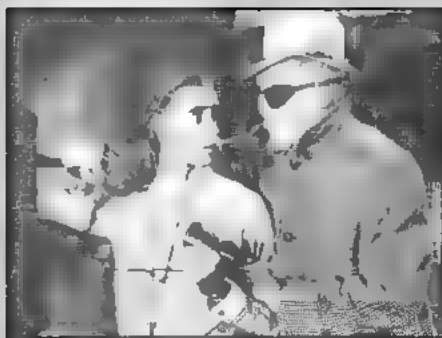
SS: Your most famous foray into sci-fi is, of course, *Donovan's Brain*, the novel you wrote in 1942.

CS: A psychologist once told me that I always write about the same problems. I told him that cannot be true. What has *For Kings Only*, which is an historical novel about a woman who has sex only with royalty, to do with *Donovan's Brain*, the story of a scientist who keeps a brain alive beyond its owners' death? The psychologist replied, "You write only about people who wish to succeed beyond their wildest imagining, who wish to climb to the top of the mountain, but never get there." Autobiography? I never wanted to reach the top of the mountain. Where do you go once you get there? (Laughs) My brother reached the summit and had nowhere else to go. The remainder of his life was repetition.

SS: You had a troubled relationship with your brother Robert, didn't you?

CS: We had a sibling rivalry. Before we left Germany, he had a magazine. I wrote





PAGE 40: Curt Siodmak sets up a shot for Hammer's **TALES OF FRANKENSTEIN** (1958). PAGE 41: The lighting cameraman is Gert Anderson, the director is Curt Siodmak, and the Monster of **TALES OF FRANKENSTEIN** is Don Megowan. **LEFT:** John Carradine has created his own monster in **ION HALL**, and must suffer **THE INVISIBLE MAN'S REVENGE** (1944). **CENTER:** Peter Lorre cracks up (again!) in **THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS** (1946), with Robert Alda and Andrea King. **RIGHT:** Lon Chaney Jr. questions Raymond Burr in **BRIDE OF THE GORILLA** (1951) under the watchful gaze of Gisela Werbisek. **BELOW:** Bela Lugosi in **FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN** (1943).

"How can I get an agent? How much money can I make?" Another Sidney Sheldon in the making. I showed him all of my books, everything . . .

**SS:** Do you have copies of all your screenplays?  
**CS:** No, I do not! I don't have any of my scripts; I should! Because I didn't take it seriously. My writing, yes, my books—but for the films I never kept anything.

**SS:** Did your script for **THE WOLF MAN** reach the screen pretty much intact?

**CS:** I always delivered a script to Universal as close to the shooting date as possible. That discouraged the front office

from interfering with the screenplay. The producer, George Waggner, didn't interfere with me—he wanted my ideas, not his. Also, Universal was stingy. They didn't like to spend money on rewrites, so in those days you stood a good chance of seeing your work reach the screen close to the way you wrote it. That was the secret of creating a classic like **THE WOLF MAN**. The only thing they changed was the character of Larry Talbot. I wrote him as an American mechanic installing a telescope in a Scottish castle. They changed him to the son of an English lord—the character played by Claude Rains. Who would believe Lon Chaney Jr. as the son of an English lord? (Laughs) Other than that, they didn't tamper much with the screenplay. But I will tell you—when you write a werewolf picture, you must consider the bladder.

**SS:** Beg your pardon?

**CS:** For the transformations. Lon would be put in position and have to remain there. The cameraman would expose 10 frames of film and then they would make a change to the makeup. Lon had to keep perfectly still, had to keep his eyes focused on one spot. It took six hours to complete his transformation.

Well, what do you do in such a situation when nature calls?

Nothing! (Laughs)

**SS:** **THE WOLF**

**MAN** was originally planned for Boris Karloff, who never played it. In 1940, Karloff turned down the part of the split-personality professor in **BLACK FRIDAY**.

**CS:** The dual role I wrote for Karloff, yes, but he chose not to play it. It was far too complex, too intricate, and

he was afraid of the level of acting it would involve. He was con-

cerned he wouldn't come off well, so he was smart enough to turn it down. So they got a stage actor, Stanley Ridges, to play the dual role. When that happened, Karloff took the role that was going to be played by Bela Lugosi, and Lugosi ended up playing the smaller role of a gangster, which was a big mistake. With that thick Hungarian accent of his, he could never be convincing as an American gangster! It was terrible! Except for playing Dracula, he was not much of an actor.

**SS:** **THE WOLF MAN** was enormously popular, of course. It put Lawrence Talbot on equal terms with Count Dracula and the Frankenstein Monster.

**CS:** Audiences during the war flocked to these horror pictures, even while the world was filled with real-life horrors and atrocities. They were looking for a release from the fears of wartime, and they found it in these supernatural tales of ghouls and monsters. They found thrills and excitement and even a sense of hope by escaping into this fantastic fairy-tale world. These pictures are still around today because they were based on imagination and implication. They relied on menace and mystery, not on blood and violence. They are classic tales of fantasy, and they still hold up. Audiences still enjoy them.

**SS:** Do you still benefit from the creation of so enduring a character?

**CS:** I received 10 weeks' salary for **THE WOLF MAN**, and it still plays around the world every day. It's on television, on cassette, or even sometimes on the movie screen. Out of this, the writer gets nothing. Do I care? No. Lon Chaney Jr. is dead. George Waggner is dead. Claude Rains is dead. When I look at the credits, everyone else is dead! But I am alive. I am still writing. One night I had a dream I dreamed that Lon said to me, "Why don't we change places? I'll give you my millions." I declined.

**SS:** Wasn't your original concept for **THE WOLF MAN** that the audience would never see Larry Talbot as a werewolf? We'd never know if it was all his imagination?

**CS:** That's right, and that's what I did later when I wrote and directed **BRIDE OF THE GORILLA**, also with Lon Chaney, Jr.—although he was not the gorilla or the man who thought he was a gorilla. That was Raymond Burr.





**LEFT: I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE** (1943) was a welcome break for Curt Siodmak from scripting and providing story ideas for Universal's stable of vampires, werewolves, and man-made monsters. Frances Dee starred, and the zombie shadow is Darby Jones. **CENTER: Lon Chaney Jr.** was the frequent star of Siodmak's movie concoctions. Here, he menaces Robert Pate in **SON OF DRACULA** (1943), a film directed by Curt's brother and "rival," Robert. **RIGHT: The fifties brought sci-fi to the fore as movie monsters took a temporary vacation** **EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS** (1956) united Siodmak and stop-motion master Ray Harryhausen.

**SS:** Not showing the monster is also the approach that was taken by producer Val Lewton for his RKO film *CAT PEOPLE*.

**CS:** That was made after *THE WOLF MAN*, and it was made because of *THE WOLF MAN*. Val Lewton was very jealous of people who could write. He was a frustrated writer. When I wrote *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* for him, he told me that he had read *Donovan's Brain* and that it wasn't a good book. Then he said it was interesting in the sense of Kant's philosophy, in that it answered the question "Can a brain without a body experience and digest new information?" Of course, I had never even considered Kant when I wrote *Donovan's Brain*.

**SS:** Speaking of *Donovan's Brain*, do you like any of the three film versions of your novel?

**CS:** I might! I've never seen them! (Laughs) The first one, they changed the title to *THE LADY AND THE MONSTER*. And they put the scientist in a castle! Herbert Yates, who ran Republic Pictures, said to me I was crazy. I asked him why. He said, "You can't make a scientist live in a little house in the desert. He has to live in a castle!" So they had a castle, and they put Erich von Stroheim in this castle in the desert. With Vera Hruba Ralston, who was sleeping with Herbert Yates!

**SS:** What about the version they made in 1953, with the proper title?

**CS:** Nancy Davis Reagan was in it. She made Vera look good. (Laughs) Then they did it again in England, and called it *THE BRAIN*. No one got it right.

**SS:** Your career actually began long before Hollywood, in Germany.

**CS:** Germany threw me out! England threw me out! France threw me out! America was a country that wanted me and accepted me. Today I live like a king, in a palatial estate on 50 acres overlooking the mountains of California. Every night I look out over the mountains and say "Heil Hitler," because without that son of a bitch, I would never have come to America! I'd still be in Berlin.

**SS:** You wrote your life story in *Even a Man Who is Pure in Heart*, a limited edition book in 1997.

**CS:** I'm writing another book; it will be called *Unfinished Ruminations*. Except I finished it! (Laughs) Actually, I did not, I finished about 500 or 600 pages—and so that's my life. I was in Berlin in 1929. I

was already 27 years old. Five guys of the same age were there: Edgar Ulmer, Fred Zinneman, Billy Wilder was a dancer and a journalist. My brother Robert was a film cutter in the motion pictures, hoping to become a director. Myself, I already had some success; I was already published. We all came to America. Vicki Baum, who wrote *Grand Hotel*—she was there and she came over here. There was a stage play over here that was based on her book. Even Greta Garbo came over, and she wound up starring in the movie of Vicki Baum's book. All the intelligence came over here, and it slowly built up a culture of sorts.

**SS:** You don't seem to think too much of the "intelligence" you meet nowadays.

**CS:** Today I had lunch with a young man who was 28, nice, good looking—but no attention! How can you learn from the past if you can't pay attention? To get the attention of that man, to tell him something I think is important for a young person to know—it's almost impossible. Every two minutes he looked away, looked away. He cannot concentrate when something that doesn't actually interest him in his life, for himself, is being discussed. This young man knows everything about his job, perfectly. All the fringe benefits around—all the rest of life—he doesn't know. American education is lackadaisical. Now I ask you, who's the President of Germany?

**SS:** Haven't a clue!

**CS:** There, you see? Germany—it's in the newspaper every day! People pay no attention. A guy asked me to sign a book of mine. I said, "Yes, my name is on it, but I didn't write it." "Oh, you didn't?" "For God's sake, you had the book for years and you never looked at it, never read it, never noticed that I hadn't written it!" Now, we in Europe had a proper education. We had what they call the Gymnasium, which is high school. The last thing you do is called Abitur. It's an examination—Abitur. You write down every goddamn thing you learned since kindergarten—calculus, English, German, history, whatever! Then came college and then they give you a year to sew your oats and have your girlfriends or whatever and have a hell of a good time. Then you start to work again! Here, they don't care much about high school, but as soon as

you go to college they put the pressure on—just at the age where all the hormones are big league and your mind is on other things! In Germany, they gave young people the time to expand themselves sexually or whatever, so that it didn't interfere with work.

**SS:** Sex first, work later—but doesn't that sound like kids today?

**CS:** I was asked to speak at a college. I talked about science fiction; the kids were tremendously interested. I walked on campus and in five minutes I couldn't follow their dialogue anymore, couldn't understand what they were talking about!

**SS:** What's so hard to understand?

**CS:** It's an idea. Let's say it's an idea I just wrote. Then you go to the laboratory and work for 20 years and you find out I'm right and you drop the fiction from science! If you cannot prove it, you still have science fiction!

**SS:** That's certainly a reasonable explanation!

**CS:** Science fiction is every idea that hasn't been proved to be practical. The greatest science-fiction writer of the world was Nietzsche! So I have a great respect for everybody, but I'm not overawed by people's minds. We all have three brains—or to put it better, three parts to our brains. Depends on how you use them!

**SS:** Your most famous foray into sci-fi is, of course, *Donovan's Brain*, the novel you wrote in 1942.

**CS:** A psychologist once told me that I always write about the same problems. I told him that cannot be true. What has *For Kings Only*, which is an historical novel about a woman who has sex only with royalty, to do with *Donovan's Brain*, the story of a scientist who keeps a brain alive beyond its owner's death? The psychologist replied, "You write only about people who wish to succeed beyond their wildest imagining, who wish to climb to the top of the mountain, but never get there." Autobiography? I never wanted to reach the top of the mountain. Where do you go once you get there? (Laughs) My brother reached the summit and had nowhere else to go. The remainder of his life was repetition.

**SS:** You had a troubled relationship with your brother Robert, didn't you?

**CS:** We had a sibling rivalry. Before we left Germany, he had a magazine. I wrote



TOP: Boris Karloff turned down the role of the college professor with a gangster's brain in *BLACK FRIDAY* (1940), taking the role of the doctor who performs the surgery. Stanley Ridges played the subject of the experiment. MIDDLE: Curt Siodmak enjoyed writing jungle epics. This one is *TARZAN'S MAGIC FOUNTAIN* (1949), a *LOST HORIZON* variation with Alan Napier, Evelyn Ankers, and Lex Barker as the King of the Apes. BOTTOM: Siodmak just can't get away from playing mind games. Here, it's *CREATION WITH THE ATOM BRAIN* (1955).

for the magazine, but I had to change my name. He only wanted one Siodmak around—always. He moved here and became very famous. He rose like a rocket. After we both came to Hollywood, he insisted that he would direct and I would

understand. He knew that we could never work well together, and someone had to prevail. Naturally, it was the director. The next day I was out, and they took on the writer, Eric Taylor. The idea was all mine, but he got the credit.

only write. We made one picture together, *SON OF DRACULA*.

SS: Many horror fans consider that one of Universal's best films of the forties.

CS: Lon Chaney, Jr. was not well cast as a vampire. He was not Bela Lugosi, who should have played the part. Also, Lon was not on his best behavior making the picture. He broke a vase over my brother Robert's head! (Laughs) Robert thought it was amusing.

SS: It's not the sort of thing most people would easily laugh off.

CS: Robert—well, genius and insanity is closely related. Robert was a very complex character. He couldn't get a job in Hollywood. He came from France; he'd had great successes in Europe. Then he came over here and they didn't know him. So he went to the director Preston Sturges and Preston Sturges telephoned Sol Siegel, I think, at Paramount and said, "We have the most famous European director right here!" Then he turned to Robert and said, "Hey, you, what's your name?"

(Laughs) And Robert got a job and did a few B pictures for Paramount. He hated making them, because they were no more than technical exercises. Long shot, medium shot, over shoulder right, over shoulder left, closeup—he just hated it! Sol Siegel wanted to fire him, and told the cameraman, Van Fenger, to provoke him. He refused to film Robert's shots. He said to him, "You're such a big director! Why don't you film your own shots?" Robert said, "This is Paramount shit, not a Siodmak picture!" And Siegel fired him! That's how Universal got Robert for *SON OF DRACULA*, that began his great success in Hollywood. And the first thing he did was to have me fired from writing the picture!

SS: Brotherly love!

CS: I didn't blame him. I

SS: Aren't you given story credit on *SON OF DRACULA*, though?

CS: Yes! It was my story!

SS: Did Eric Taylor follow your story or did he go off on his own?

CS: Oh, no, my story was there. You see, I always had an idea for my stories; that's why I've been paid in every goddamn country. Nobody has ideas! *THE WOLF MAN* is cursed to turn into a beast when the moon is full. A thousand writers can write stories using that idea, but they can never replace the original idea, and that is mine. The wheel falls apart without its pivot. With *SON OF DRACULA*, the idea was that a woman is very much in love with her man and she thinks she's losing him. She thinks he will die. So she invites Count Dracula to marry her, because he is a vampire and will make her a vampire. Then she can make her lover a vampire and they will have eternal love. That was the story, which they couldn't drop.

SS: Taylor did a good job on the screenplay, though, using your story.

CS: A very good job! He had a good story! But Robert was not happy with what Universal offered him. He came to me crying and said, "They're offering me only \$125 a week, what a writer makes!" But I cannot do anything about it; I have no money and I must take what they offer." One year later, he's making a \$1,000 a day!

SS: So he got \$125 a week and a vase over the head from Lon Chaney Jr.!

CS: Lon got drunk and took a vase and smashed the whole thing! Chaney, he was a sick guy.

SS: Why, do you think?

CS: His father was one of the greatest stars in the world, and he treated him badly. He was looking for a father figure. That's why *OF MICE AND MEN* was his life story—he played a half-wit who had someone to tell him what to do.

SS: In an interview for the book *It's Alive* by Greg Mank, you said you thought Chaney's problem was that he was a homosexual and couldn't deal with it.

CS: I don't know why people are interested in other peoples' sex affairs, I'm more interested in my own! (Laughs) Sometimes in a long conversation like that, some things slip by that you ought to take out before you print—like saying the man is a homosexual. It came out in my feeling, it's a slip of the tongue but you know how editors are . . .

SS: No comment! (Laughs)

CS: So many Hollywood stars were homosexual like Rock Hudson or bisexual like Cary Grant, but nobody ever mentioned the intimate details of their lives publicly. That hasn't changed very much in Hollywood. A magazine once wanted to run a story about Rock Hudson's sexual adventures. The studio paid the magazine off by giving them another story about a lesser actor, and they saved Hudson's career. But Lon Chaney Jr.—basically, no. He didn't like women; I don't know for what reason. I directed Lon in *BRIDE OF THE GORILLA*, and I had Raymond Burr, who was the father of ad-

Continued on page 77



# CULT MOVIES

MAGAZINE

## CONVENTION 2000

October 20-22 • Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel • Hollywood, CA

Friday 3 pm - 8 pm • Saturday 10 am - 6 pm • Sunday 10 am - 6 pm

featuring

**Ox Baker**

*Escape from New York*

**Dave Stevens**

*Creator of The Rocketeer*

**Superstar Billy Graham**

*The Wrestler*

**Larry Karazewski**

*Screen Writer*

*Ed Wood, Man on the Moon*

**Ann Robinson**

*War of the Worlds*

**Bob Burns**

*Classic Sci Fi*

*Curator/Historian*

**Daniel Roebuck**

*Final Destination*

*Fugitive*

**Bill Stout**

*Artist, Dinosaur, Wizards*

*Return of the Living Dead Poster*

**Chuck Williams**

*Happy Haunting of America*

**Gilbert & Jaime Hernandez**

*Love and Rockets*



**Robert Quarry**

*Count Yorga Vampire*

**Jon Provost**

*Timmy from Lassie*

**Philip Chamberlin**

*Noted Film Historian*

**Forrest J Ackerman**

*Father of Sci Fi*

*Cult film star*

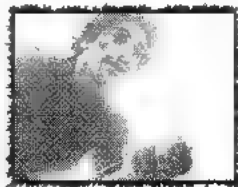
**Frank Dello Stritto**

*Lugosi author*

**Jack Hill**

*Director*

*Spider Baby, Foxy Brown*



**David Hess**

*Last House on the Left*

**Titus Moody**

*Producer/Director*

*Cinematographer*

*Rat Fink & Boo Boo*

**Turhan Bey**

*The Spiritualist*

**Katherine Orrison**

*Cecil B. deMille authority*

**Camille Keaton**

*I Spit on Your Grave*

**David Durston**

*Director*

*I Drink Your Blood*

**Laurie Jacobson**

*Author*

*Hollywood Haunted*

**David Schow**

*Outer Limits Companion*

**Kathy Wood**

*Of Ed Wood Fame*

**Johnny Legend**

*Actor/Director*

*Rock & Roll & Wrestling Star*

**Harry Novak**

*King of the Box Office*

*Naked Pursuit, Mondo Mod*

**Fred Olen Ray**

*Director*

*Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers*

**Yvette Vickers**

*Attack of the 50 Foot Woman*

*Attack of the Giant Leeches*

**Kitten Natividad**

*Ultra Vixens*



**Bladerunner Stars**

*Joanne Cassidy*

*Wm. Sanderson*

*Joe Turke*



**Bob Chinn**

*Creator/Director of*

*Johnny Wadd Detective Series*

**Cynthia Myers**

*Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*

**Dolores Fuller**

*Star of Glen or Glenda*

*Elvis Presley Songwriter*

**Brad Linaweaver**

*Mr. Media Tie In*

### Special Advance Tickets

3-day VIP advance pass

Pre-order by July 30 only \$40!

Pre-order by Oct. 1 only \$50!

\$60 at door, VIP passes are \$100+ value and include 3-day admission, invitation to awards ceremony, and many other surprises! Availability is limited!

Regular 3-day pass \$25

(does not include awards ceremony or entertainment)

1-day admission \$10

Awards Ceremony

\$35 if bought with a paid admission or \$50 if bought separately.

Ask about the Platinum Pass for \$75.

This offer supercedes any previous offer. Offer good only while supplies last. We also offer group rates.

### Hotel Reservations

Call (800) 950-7667 (9 am - 8:30 pm). Hurry! Rooms are going fast!! For the special room rate reserve by August 7 and mention *Cult Movies Magazine Convention 2000*. Reserve by June 15 and receive a free 3-day VIP pass with your two night stay. Or, reserve by August 7 and receive a free regular 3-day pass with your two night stay.

### Special Attractions

- Pete Smith's 3-D Murder
- Incredible film program
- 1-of-a-kind panel discussions
- Monster make-up demo
- Over 50 dealers!

Dealer tables available. Call for info.

#### Contact us:

www.cult-movies.com

cultmovies@aol.com

(310) 324-3106

#### Send ticket orders to:

Cameo Distributors, LLC

PO Box 685

Torrance, CA 90508

#### Hotline:

(213) 612-5156

Not all guests are listed. Guests are subject to change. *Cult Movies Magazine* is a registered trademark. 5/29/00

Just added--KASEY ROGERS (by special arrangement with *Scarlet Street*)

# MR. DONOVAN



# STEPS OUT

Curt Siodmak's sci-fi classic *Donovan's Brain*  
goes to the movies...

A Medical Examination by Brooke Perry



The achievements of Curt Siodmak almost defy description. It's not every day that you find someone connected to Hollywood who (A) had his first short story published at the age of nine, (B) escaped the clutches of Hitler and his government, (C) wrote the screenplays for some of the most famous monster movies ever made, and (D) is still alive to tell us all about it!

Born in Dresden, Germany, in 1910, Siodmak began his writing career as a journalist for a magazine called *Kinderwelt*. One of his assignments was to cover a well-known director named Fritz Lang, at the time in production for a film called *METROPOLIS* (1927). Getting his first exposure to both the film making industry and the sci-fi genre at the hands of such a master would have a profound effect on the young Siodmak.

One of Siodmak's earliest efforts in the genre was the well received *F. P. 1. Antwort Nicht* (*Floating Platform One Does Not Answer*), published in 1930. He later turned this

PAGE 46: The 1964 German production *THE BRAIN* is the most recent version of Curt Siodmak's 1943 novel *Donovan's Brain* to date. Pictured: Anne Heywood. LEFT: In keeping with horror-movie tradition, *THE LADY AND THE MONSTER* (1944) transforms the desert laboratory of *Donovan's Brain* into a desert castle laboratory, inhabited by Janice Farrell (Vera Hruba Ralston), Patrick Cory (Richard Arlen), and Professor Franz Mueller (Erich Von Stroheim). BELOW RIGHT: The coroner (Harry Hayden) pronounces Donovan dead, but part of him lives on. BELOW LEFT: Donovan's brain pulsates with life, as Vera Ralston reacts with admirable restraint. BOTTOM RIGHT: Patrick and Janice are determined to destroy the brain, as housekeeper Mrs. Fame (Mary Nash) keeps a watchful eye out for the mad Mueller.

*Donovan's Brain* first saw publication in a pulp magazine called *The Black Mask*. While echoing a similar theme



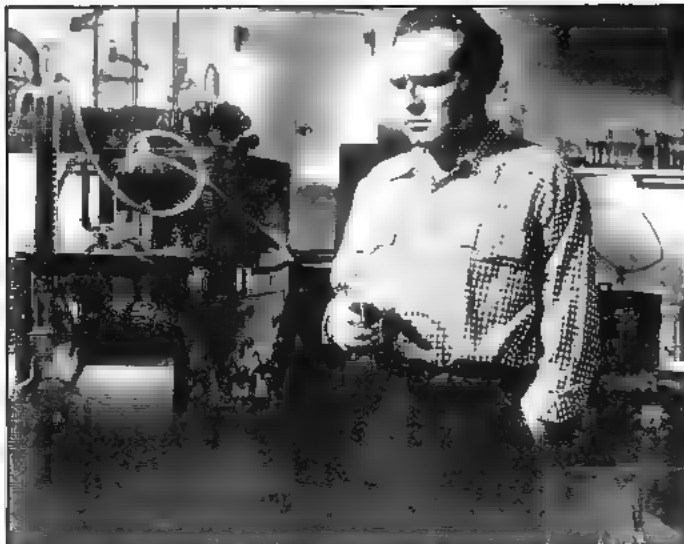
explored in H. P. Lovecraft's pulp series "Herbert West: Reanimator," Siodmak's piece addresses many themes not prevalent in other examples of genre literature of the day. Such notions as telepathy, possession via mind control, automatic writing, and postmortem experimentation on body parts were more in line with horror and the supernatural than sci-fi, yet this is where Siodmak excelled. *Donovan's Brain* is not pure sci-fi, it isn't pure horror, either. Indeed, it's an immaculate blending of the two, combining tension and fear from the horror perspective with a believable scientific framework.

For two weeks in 1944, scores of avid radio listeners tuned in to hear "Donovan's Brain" performed on the CBS classic radio program *SUSPENSE*. Adapted by Robert Richards, the cast was extraordinary. Orson Welles not only starred, but was interestingly double-cast as both Dr. Cory and Donovan. Jeanette Nolan, who later played Lady Mac-



into a screenplay in 1932. It was not long after this that Hitler came to power in Germany. Fearing for his life, Siodmak fled first to England, and later to Hollywood. There, he worked for Paramount and was later employed at Universal. Among the many screenplays he turned out during his Hollywood tenure were *THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS* (1940), *BLACK FRIDAY* (1940), *THE WOLF MAN* (1941), *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* (1943), *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN* (1943), *SON OF DRACULA* (1943), and *THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS* (1946). While this last-named screenplay would be plagiarized many times down the years, the work of Siodmak's that has seen more than its share of cloning has been his classic novel *Donovan's Brain* (1943). Three screen versions and one radio dramatization have been made, not to mention an endless stream of mad doctor/evil brain movies for which it has served as inspiration.





**LEFT:** The 1953 production of *DONOVAN'S BRAIN* starred former Dr. Kildare Lew Ayres as Dr. Patrick Cory, the man who becomes possessed by the "title character." **RIGHT:** Gene Evans played Cory's hard-drinking assistant Dr. Frank Schraft, a made-to-order victim of Donovan who, remarkably, survives!

both in Welles' stunning 1948 film version of Shakespeare's tragedy, portrayed Janice Cory. Rounding out the cast was the inimitable Hans Conried, playing Dr. Gustoff Zanger and a radio newsmen. Directed by William Spier, the production is paced very briskly, throwing the listener into the crazed world of Patrick Cory within the first three minutes of airtime. The wonderful foley sound effects created by Berne Surrey throw an extra layer of creepiness into the mix that is truly delightful. Welles gets plenty of opportunities to ham it up, but is quite effective in Cory's more reflective moments, at times recalling his lengthy monologue in the second half of his own 1939 *WAR OF THE WORLDS* radio drama.

It was natural that *Donovan's Brain* would lend itself to the big screen. In 1944, the first of three direct adaptations was made. *THE LADY AND THE MONSTER*, despite its ridiculous title, is a surprisingly effective mix of Siodmak's original story and some neat *film noir* touches. Erich von Stroheim appears as Dr. Franz Muller, a scientist obsessed with studying the afterlife of the brain. Richard Arlen plays Patrick Cory, Muller's assistant and unfortunate victim of the power of Donovan's brain. Janice Farrell, Cory's love interest and assistant to Muller, is portrayed by the lovely Vera Hrubá Ralston.

After his research with monkey brains proves successful (to everyone but the monkey), Dr. Muller decides to experiment with a human specimen. The crash of an airplane carrying Wall Street magnate W. H. Donovan provides a convenient opportunity for Muller's obsession. After Cory retrieves Donovan's body from the wreckage, he returns to the lab (appropriately called "The Castle"). All efforts to save Donovan are useless and he is pronounced dead. Muller, Cory, and Janice remove the brain and submerge it in a tank filled with blood plasma and other nutritional fluids. The brain is indeed alive, as Muller and Cory gleefully observe the EKG patterns being registered on the lab equipment, but the process is too slow for Cory's liking. After "overfeeding" the brain on blood plasma, the unexpected happens: he hears Donovan's voice inside his own head, and scribbles Donovan's name on a sheet of paper—in the dead man's handwriting! (The signature is reproduced exactly with Cory's left hand, as Donovan was also a southpaw.)

At first, Donovan's voice simply repeats short words and phrases, but his mental hold over Cory grows stronger until Cory is completely possessed by Donovan's brain. The possession drives Cory into an intriguing mystery, complete with hidden bank accounts, a death row murderer

(William Henry) whom Donovan maintains is innocent, a corrupt lawyer (Sidney Blackmer) conspiring with Donovan's widow (Helen Vinson), and a very shady businessman (Charles Cane) who has the power to influence juries and witnesses should the need ever arise. Meanwhile, back at The Castle, Muller locks himself inside the lab and guards Donovan's brain, where his own self-interest, greed, and lust for Janice come into play. Returning to the lab, Cory, with the help of Janice and a rather creepy housemaid named Mrs. Fame (Mary Nash), defeats Muller and silences Donovan's brain forever.

With its very brisk running time of 83 minutes, screenwriters Frederick Kohner and Dane Lusnier and director George Sherman infuse *THE LADY AND THE MONSTER* with a lot of bang for the buck. Erich von Stroheim is delightfully villainous, scowling frequently at the camera and limping down the shadowed corridors of The Castle. While his accent does make for some unintentionally humorous line readings ("And don't forget the giggly saw!"), he nonetheless exhibits a macabre presence onscreen. Vera Ralston also turns in a good performance as Janice, though her character has relatively little to do. By including Janice as an assistant in the experiments, the story involves the heroine on a deeper level than one usually finds in a horror thriller. Instead of relegating the character to a cliché-ridden, melodramatic performance, Ralston plays Janice with a convincing air of uneasy confidence and caution.

Nevertheless, Richard Arlen steals the show as Cory. It's revelatory to watch Arlen, so often a stodgy leading man, react as Donovan slowly takes control of Cory. Arlen, aided by effective bottom lighting, completely changes in front of us. He alters his posture, his walk, his facial expressions, his voice. When Donovan is in complete control, Arlen in no way resembles the meek character he plays earlier in the film. In the scenes in which Donovan relinquishes control while we watch Cory onscreen, Arlen's physical transformation is worthy of the best Jekyll and Hydes.

Unfortunately that so good an adaptation should be lumbered with so cheesy a title, but the worst was yet to come. Reissued in 1949, the film went under the title *MONSTER AND THE TIGER MAN*, which was later shortened to just *TIGER MAN*. Just when you thought the world was safe from non sequiturs . . .

Siodmak had contributed substantially to the perpetuation of our favorite classic movie monsters in the forties, but a change was looming on the horizon, one largely reflecting the use of newly discovered science and technology. While making the world a better, safer place in which to live, was



You've read about 'em in  
Now you can get 'em from

They're the mysteries and horror movies and adventure films you buy **Scarlet Street** to read about, now available at last on video from **Scarlet Street!**

# Scarlet<sup>®</sup> Street

The Magazine of Mystery and Horror

Stuck in the house with just nothing to do? What you need is a movie to help pass the time between rats . . .

Bride of Frankenstein  
The Brides of Dracula  
The Climax  
Creature From the Black Lagoon  
The Creature Walks Among Us  
Curse of the Werewolf  
Dracula, Prince of Darkness  
Dracula's Daughter  
Dr. Cyclops  
Four-Sided Triangle  
Frankenstein  
Frankenstein Created Woman  
Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man  
The Ghost of Frankenstein  
Horror of Dracula  
House of Dracula  
House of Frankenstein  
House of Horrors  
House of Wax  
Invisible Agent  
The Invisible Man  
The Invisible Man Returns  
The Invisible Man's Revenge  
It Came From Outer Space  
The Land Unknown  
The Leech Woman  
Lost Continent (1968)  
The Mad Ghoul  
Man Made Monster

The Mole People  
The Monster and the Girl  
Monster on the Campus  
The Mummy (1932)  
The Mummy (1959)  
The Mummy's Curse  
The Mummy's Ghost  
The Mummy's Hand  
The Mummy's Shroud  
The Mummy's Tomb  
Murders in the Zoo  
Phantom of the Opera (1962)  
Plague of the Zombies  
Quatermass and the Pit  
The Return of Dracula  
Revenge of the Creature  
The Satanic Rites of Dracula  
Son of Dracula  
Son of Frankenstein  
Tarantula  
The Uninvited  
WereWolf of London  
What's the Matter With Helen  
The Wolf Man



Send check or money order to  
**Scarlet Street Video**  
P.O. Box 604  
Glen Rock, NJ 07452  
Complete Catalogue: \$2.

VHS only. Shipping in continental U.S.A.—\$4 first tape, \$2 each additional tape. Canada \$8 first tape, \$4 each additional tape. Foreign, insured surface (for airmail, double rates) \$11 first tape, \$5 each additional tape. Scarlet Street ships via UPS and orders must have street address.

NJ residents add 6% sales tax.  
Allow 6 to 8 weeks for delivery.

**Only \$14.95  
Per Video!**



it also possible that science could hurt us? If so, could it hurt us —intentionally?

The apocalyptic conclusion of World War II paved the way for the collective American mindset of the fifties, though with the new technological child came new parenting responsibilities. We now had the technology for mass destruction. Televisions were popping up in more homes, making information and entertainment more commonplace. The Cold War era had begun, with Senator Joe McCarthy leading his zealous crusade to stamp out the evils of Communism. Bomb shelters were being built in roughly three out of every five backyards. And then there was the Roswell Incident in 1947. People had UFOs, aliens, and science on the brain. Such classic monsters as Count Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster, and the Wolf Man were about to take a back seat to a more topical opponent: science. In a few short years, the world was overrun with flying saucers, giant ants and tarantulas, pod people, things—and brains!

In an interview with Patrick Sierchio, Siodmak said of *Donovan's Brain*. "It became a cottage industry of brain pictures." It's fairly easy to illustrate his assertion. Among some all-time favorites involving brains and similar mind-control themes (all from the fifties, mind you) are *INVADERS FROM MARS* (1953), *THIS ISLAND EARTH* (1955), *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS* (1956), *INVASION OF THE SAUCER MEN* (1957), *FIEND WITHOUT A FACE* (1958), and the highly underrated *INVISIBLE INVADERS* (1959). Since Siodmak was the undisputed granddaddy of this particular trend, it was only right and proper that an updated film version of *Donovan's Brain* should join the ranks of these other pictures.

The best known version of Siodmak's novel, United Artists' *DONOVAN'S BRAIN* (1953), is actually something

of a disappointment. Directed by Felix Feist (who also co-scripted with Hugh Brooke), this version lacks the focus and drive found in the previous incarnation. While many of the story elements remain similar to *THE LADY AND THE MONSTER*, the story is stripped down even further, and the results are awkward. After becoming possessed by Donovan's brain, Cory travels to Los Angeles. Drawing funds from a secret bank account, he proceeds to blackmail a group of corrupt officials in Washington who have an interest in the late W. H. Donovan's aversion to paying taxes. Donovan, through Cory, also keeps a nosy press photographer at bay by paying him off for photos of the brain taken in Cory's home (The photographer also has pictures of Donovan's corpse in the morgue, showing the surgical stitches marking the removal of the brain, so the late millionaire considers this money well spent.)

More interesting here is that Cory begins to exhibit the same physical ailments as Donovan did in life. His right hand holds his kidney, as if in pain. He also affects the limp that Donovan had in real life. Arriving in Los Angeles, Cory orders tailor-made suits identical to those favored by Donovan. He even orders the same two buck cigars. Watching the physical transformation in concert with the mental possession lends a fascinating new twist, as Cory literally becomes W. H. Donovan.

Also of interest is that, for the first time, we see the will of Donovan's brain not just imposed on a single character, as was the case in *THE LADY AND THE MONSTER*. Donovan's attacks can be made on anyone he chooses, and the results of such attacks can be deadly. Besides his machinations with Cory, Donovan's brain causes the direct death of one character and a serious gunshot injury to another. Though these elements are improvements over the first



version, most of them come too late to compensate for a script that is promising, but ultimately weak.

The casting of the leads certainly doesn't allay the film's problems. Lew Ayres stars as Patrick Cory Ayres was best known for his portrayal of Dr. Kildare in a series of warm, fuzzy MGM programmers, and therein lies the rub—his characterization is too much Kildare and not enough Cory. Here, Cory has neither the obsession or the drive that makes him succumb to the will of Donovan's brain. Ayres is much too congenial to be believable as a scientist who would dabble in unwholesome practices for the benefit of himself and mankind. When he transforms into Donovan, his voice becomes slightly more gruff, but his demeanor scarcely changes.

Nancy Davis (the future First Lady after a surname change to Reagan) turns in a lifeless performance as Cory's wife, Janice. Her presence lends nothing to the picture, and Janice comes off as mere set decoration instead of a crucial character. She spends most of her time staring dully at the brain in the tank, or staring dully at Lew Ayres. In both cases, her presence is—well, dull.

In contrast, Gene Evans is remarkable as Dr. Frank Schratt, Cory's assistant. His bespectacled, burly presence offers a nice contrast to Ayres, both in physical appearance and personality. Evans' character is the most fleshed out of the leads, but his performance suffers from a lack of screen time and, again, the writing. It's established from his opening scene that Schratt is an alcoholic, but little is done with this information, and it turns up nowhere else after the first 20 minutes of the film. Having Donovan's brain play on Schratt's alcoholism as a weakness to be exploited would have been an interesting route to explore, perhaps.

Some of the minor characters get a good treatment. In particular, Steve Brodie's portrayal of nosy newshound Herbie Yocum is deliciously sleazy. Despite the contrived situations written for his character, his performance is fun to watch, and he gets some of the best lines in the film.

While the sci-fi boom of the fifties was engrossing the USA, there was a simultaneous resurgence of the classic monsters happening across the Atlantic. The inimitable Hammer Films of England released their own versions of the Universal classics, with such groundbreaking and innovative retellings as *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1957) and *HORROR OF DRACULA* (1958). While Hammer also tried their hand in the sci fi genre—quite successfully in *THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT* (1956) and *QUATERMASS 2* (1957), among others—it was the horror ventures that gained them their biggest successes. But what if the English got their hands on a work like *Donovan's Brain*? What, if anything, would they do differently with the story? After all, it wasn't written by a native American. Might there be some new perspective, some fresh angle from which the material could be approached?

Freddie Francis began his film career as a cinematographer in 1956 with the film *TIME WITHOUT PITY*. Roughly six years after his industry debut, he found himself at the helm of the second remake of *Donovan's Brain*. Released in the United States in 1964 as *THE BRAIN*, the film arrived some two years after its completion and debut in the UK and Europe.

A German/English coproduction, *THE BRAIN* took Siodmak's original idea and added yet another twist. The action is moved to Sussex, England, and the Donovan character here is renamed Max Holt, an international finance tycoon with a full share of enemies. As in the other two films, he perishes in a plane crash, but this time it seems he is the victim of a bomb hidden inside a tape recorder. Here for the first time, the Donovan character is actually murdered. This event sets the plot off in a different direction from the other two films.

Enter one scientist named Dr. Peter Corrie (played by Peter van Eyck, in a particularly deft performance). The *LADY AND THE MONSTER* research with prolonging the activity of monkey brains after death is echoed here, and Corrie's endeavors are aided by his good friend and associate Dr. Frank Shears (Bernard Lee), a stand in for *DONOVAN'S BRAIN*'s Frank Schratt. Called to the crash site, they remove Holt's body to their lab. After Holt expires, and against the protestation of Shears, Corrie removes the brain for further experimentation.

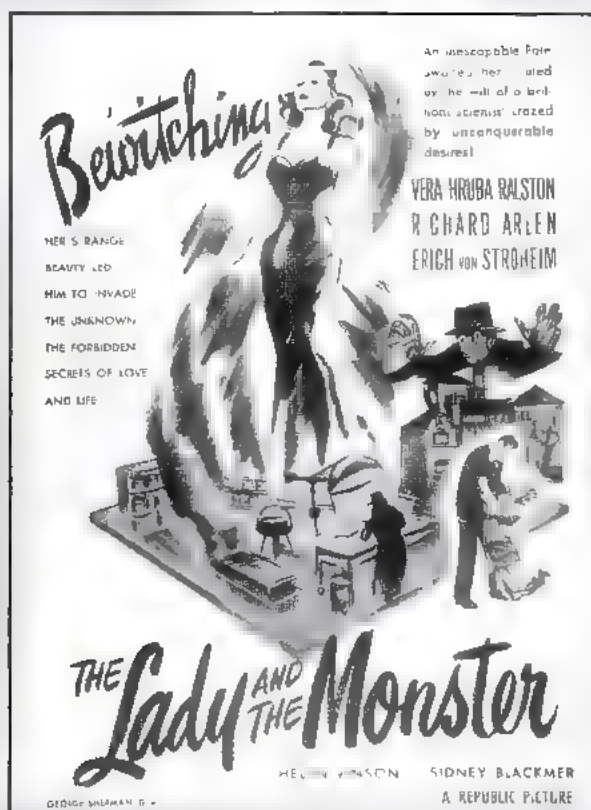
But Corrie's actions don't go unnoticed. The local mortuary attendant, Furber (played by the always delightful Jack MacGowran), has noticed the stitches around Holt's skull. An ardent follower of Corrie's research, Furber adds up the facts and tries to blackmail the doctor. This brings no results, however, since Holt's corpse is cremated, leaving no evidence. Furber then tries to sell the information to Holt's daughter, Anna (Anne Heywood).

Late one night, Holt's brain makes contact with Corrie. In this particular automatic writing sequence, Corrie scribbles out the name of several people and signs Holt's signature. By using Corrie as a puppet, Holt has made his list of possible suspects—the crime, his own murder!

*THE BRAIN* was originally released in Britain in 1962 under the title *VENGEANCE*, and it's a very apt description of the rest of the film. Holt wishes no ill will toward Corrie at all. Instead, he uses Corrie as a spy to sneak around and interview every last person on the list. During the course of his in-

vestigation, Corrie is framed for murder, escapes the clutches of police and thugs alike, and finally tricks the murderer and the accessories into revealing their roles in the demise of Max Holt. Corrie discovers that Holt was involved in an international financial scheme involving a wonder drug, and that he wished to monopolize the claim with a seedy business associate named Immerman (Hans Nielsen).

Robert Stewart and Philip Mackie adapted this version of Siodmak's novel, choosing to emphasize the murder mystery aspects rather than taking the overt sci-fi approach used in *DONOVAN'S BRAIN*. This angle plays remarkably well, given the fact that sci-fi murder mysteries are rather uncommon. The dialogue is solid throughout, the characters interact well within the action, and the acting is high caliber. (An interesting footnote: both Jack MacGowran from *THE BRAIN* and Gene Evans from *DONOVAN'S BRAIN* had briefly teamed up to battle *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH* in 1958.)



Continued on page 76

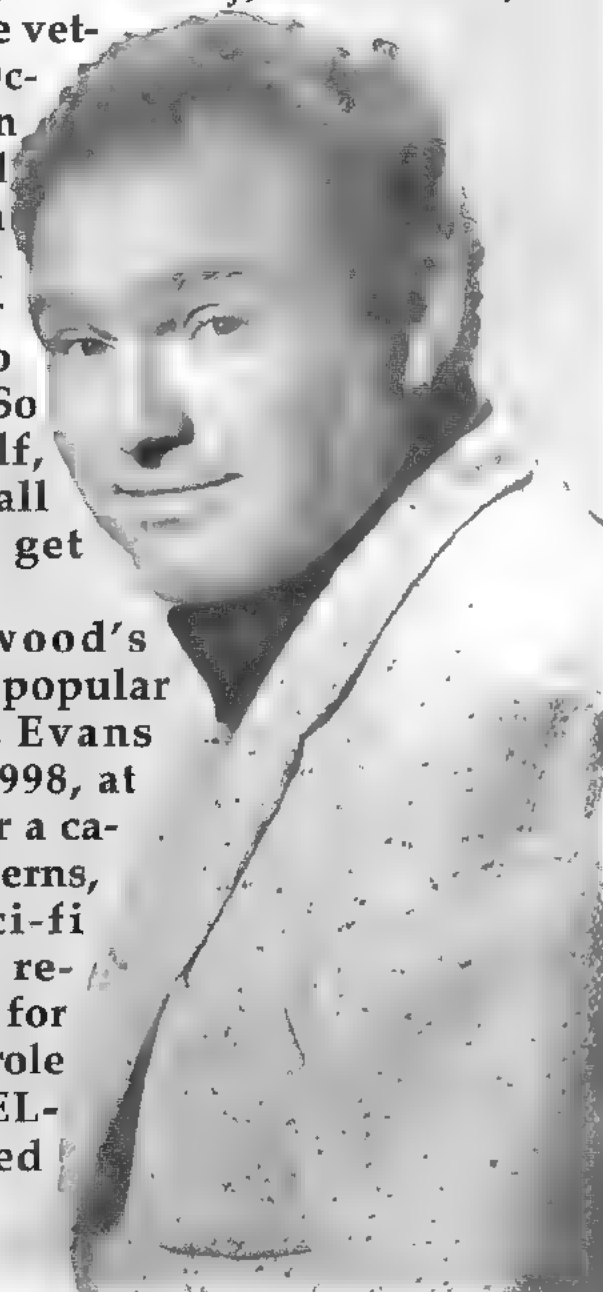
# MAN OF STEEL GENE EVANS

A Last Interview by Terry Pace

**C**haracter actor Gene Evans spent his 40-year screen career battling everything from Korean snipers and frontier gunslingers to a rampaging prehistoric monster and a sinister brain with murderous telepathic powers.

"I did absolutely anything and everything that came my way," the burly, redheaded, gravel-voiced movie veteran remarked in October 1997, during an interview at his rural Tennessee home. "In this business, you never know whether they'll catch on to you sooner or later. So I thought to myself, 'You'd better get all that you can and get out of here.'"

One of Hollywood's most versatile and popular character actors, Evans died on April 1, 1998, at the age of 74. After a career spanning Westerns, war films, and sci-fi chillers, the actor remains best known for his classic starring role in *THE STEEL HELMET* (1951), directed by maverick movie-





maker Sam Fuller. In this grim, graphic combat drama, Evans plays Zack, a rugged, hard-edged infantry sergeant in the United States Army. In spite of the chilling presence of a bullet hole in the front of his steel military helmet, Zack emerges as the sole survivor when his platoon is massacred by North Korean forces.

"Sammy Fuller had such a force—he was so dynamic," remarked Evans, who starred in several of the B-movie auteur's finest films of the fifties and sixties. "You found that out the first time you met him or talked with him. He had such a drive. He'd just launch himself at you."

A native of Holbrook, Arizona (where he was born on July 11, 1923), Evans first encountered Fuller's raw, primitive magnetism as a young stage actor yearning for a break in Hollywood. In 1950, Evans ventured into a ramshackle Hollywood studio operated by low-budget producer Robert L. Lippert. The company had hired Fuller—a veteran of World War II's heroic infantry unit, the famed Big Red One—to write, produce, and direct a movie about America's military involvement in the so-called Korean Conflict.

"He didn't ask me to read or anything," Evans recalled. "He was at his desk, and he had an M-1 rifle on the desk. When I came in and was standing there talking to him, he picked up that M-1 and said, 'What's your name, Red?'"

That fateful meeting between the actor and director occurred a full four years after Evans had completed his service in the U.S. Army's combat engineers. Yet the presence of Fuller's M-1 rifle instantly reactivated the World War II veteran's intensely conditioned military instincts.

"If you've been in the service, any time anybody who's in a position of authority picks up a weapon like that, your mind automatically goes, 'Look out and get ready—because you're going to get it back, just like inspection,'" Evans explained. "They'll take the gun and screw with it until they see you just lose your attention. Then they'll throw it at you. And if you drop it, you're in bad shape—at least you were in the outfit I was in."

Evans' wily suspicions proved to be sound, as Fuller suddenly thrust the rifle at him with the growling demand, "Rack it back!"

"Now, you could lose your thumb with an M-1—it had to be one fluid motion," Evans stressed. "I did it, and he said, 'Where did you learn to do that? Were you in the infantry?' I said, 'Nope.' And he said, 'Well, if you weren't in the infantry, you weren't in the Army.' I told him, 'I was in the combat engineers, and we cleaned up every mess the infantry ever made!'"

Admiring Evans' crusty, confident attitude and his rough-and-ready look, Fuller asked the 28-year-old actor to follow him upstairs to Lippert's office. Once there, Fuller proudly announced to his producer, "I've got Zack here!" During the brief but traumatic interview that followed, Fuller and Lippert inquired about Evans' previous screen experience.

"Well, I hadn't done anything, really," Evans confessed. The actor had made his screen debut in a Monte Hale Western, Republic's *UNDER COLORADO SKIES* (1947), then followed it with a long string of minuscule roles in films ranging from the Ray Milland baseball comedy *IT HAPPENS EVERY SPRING* (1949) to John Huston's *film noir* classic, *THE ASPHALT JUNGLE* (1950). In order to reassure his prospective employers, Evans slyly stretched the truth, transforming a recently completed bit role in Billy Wilder's cynical newspaper drama *ACE IN THE HOLE* (1951, retitled *THE BIG CARNIVAL*) into a featured lead alongside top-billed stars Kirk Douglas and Jan Sterling.

"Of course the picture hadn't been released yet—it wasn't even edited yet," Evans noted. "Now, I was on that picture for about four days, but Wilder kept putting me in extra scenes. Then I decided that I would drive Kirk Douglas all the time, in order to spend more time on the picture. Now I wasn't real fond of Kirk Douglas. He was a hot shot, and he made it miserable for me that whole picture. But I wanted the experience, and I loved working with Wilder."



**PAGE 53:** Gene Evans is best known to film fans for his starring role in Sam Fuller's *THE STEEL HELMET* (1951). **BELOW:** Evans made his fair share of Westerns, looking right at home with a pair of six-guns. **RIGHT:** Evans didn't think too much of 1959's *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH* (especially its title), but it remains a favorite among fans of monster movies. **PAGE 55 LEFT:** Professor James Birkford and Steve Karnes (Andre Morell and Gene Evans) track down *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH* with the help of Dr. Sampson (Jack MacGowran). **PAGE 55 RIGHT:** Karnes and a submarine officer (Maurice Kaufmann) zero in on *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH*.

Fuller said, 'How'd you do with Wilder?' And I said, 'I got along fine.'

To Evans' immediate horror, Fuller casually asked Lippert to call Wilder, whose impeccable A-list credentials ranged from the film noir crime masterpiece *DOUBLE INDEMNITY* (1944) to Hollywood's gothic masterpiece, *SUNSET BOULEVARD* (1950).

"Now, if I had been in Lippert's position, I wouldn't have had the guts to call Billy Wilder, and I was banking that he wouldn't," Evans remembered. "What the hell business would Bob Lippert have calling Billy Wilder? We were in this shitty studio, about to do this low-budget film. But Lippert called Paramount, and they put him through! He said, 'Mr. Wilder, I hate to bother you, but it's very important to us. We're a little company. We're about to do a film, and we've got a young man here who's being considered for a very important role.' He tells me he just



finished doing a featured lead in *ACE IN THE HOLE*. He's a redheaded fellow—name's Gene Evans."

Evans' gut reaction led to a terrifying, inevitable conclusion: "Well, that's it," I thought. "I'm dead." The crucial conversation ended quickly, and Lippert hung up the phone after talking to one of Hollywood's most respected and influential directors.

"By then I'm thinking it's all over," Evans continued. "Lippert looks at Fuller and says, 'Well, if he's good enough for Billy Wilder, he's good enough for us! Wilder told him I had a featured role, which was shut—I had a bit!'"

About a year later, with *THE STEEL HELMET* garnering critical acclaim and raking in healthy box-office returns, Evans crossed paths with Wilder on the Paramount studio lot. "He came running and jumping over, his head bobbing up and down. He's a funny little guy, you know—with a great sense of humor. He said, 'Gene! Gene! You did it! You did it! Wonderful!' And I said, 'Hell, I didn't do it. You did it. I'd have never gotten it if you hadn't decided to cover for me when Lippert put you in that position.' He said, 'I'd have never said that if I'd had any doubts.' Till then I thought he was just getting rid of the guy."

Filed on a whirlwind eight-day schedule and dedicated to Fuller's beloved United States Infantry, *THE STEEL HELMET* became a landmark achievement for both its director and its star. The duo would follow their breakthrough triumph with a second Korean combat drama, the equally intense *FIXED BAYONETS* (1952). Former journalist Fuller then cast Evans as an 1880s New York newspaper reporter in *PARK ROW*, a gritty, gripping 1952 period piece.

"I think that's my favorite picture," Evans revealed. "I knew all of Sammy's stories, and he called and said, 'We're going to do *PARK ROW* next. I can't get financing for it, and I'm going to put my own money into it. So get ready.' I was weighing about 235 at the time. Sammy told me, 'You're going to have to lose some weight and get in shape, because you're going to wear those tight jackets they wore in that period. So I went from 235 to 170 by the time we did the picture. I lived on liquid Dexadrine. I knew a doctor who gave me half-gallon bottles, and I kept it in the refrigerator. I'd get up in the morning and take two belts of whiskey and a couple of shooters of that. Then I'd be ready to make them movies! I can't imagine how I lived through that.'"

Evans remembered *PARK ROW* as a refreshingly "different kind of picture" that allowed the ever-resourceful Fuller to introduce a number of unheralded cinematic innovations.

"I carried, to my knowledge, the first remote mike," Evans explained. "They put big battery packs in my pockets



and ran a wire down my pants and leg and out the sleeves of my shirt and everything. Then I had to do a fight outside a bar. It was the longest dolly shot ever done. They were on a little crab dolly, and they followed me across the street. It went through the horses and between the trolley car up the street. Then I had to fight, fight, fight. I got hold of a stunt man and bashed his head against the side of a big statue on the street. Oh, boy, it was a lot of misery. Then I had some dialogue. Just as I turned after doing this, the whole son-of-a-bitch thing shorted out! Those battery packs gave me a hell of a whack!"

In addition to his essential early-fifties work with Fuller, the hard-living, hard-drinking Evans—who would abandon drugs and alcohol altogether in 1968—performed the substantial role of a boozy surgeon in *DONOVAN'S BRAIN* (1953), the best of three screen versions of the classic sci-fi novel by Curt Siodmak (screenwriter of Universal's 1941 horror masterpiece, *THE WOLF MAN*). Evans played the second-lead role of Frank Schrantz, a simple rural doctor who assists daring, radical scientist Patrick Cory (Lew Ayres, former star of MGM's Dr. Kildare movie series) in his relentless quest to keep alive the disembodied brain of a ruthless, sadistic millionaire. Over time, the evil industrialist's brain begins to assume control over the unsuspecting scientist's mind and actions, compelling him to commit sadistic and criminal acts.

"I thought Lew Ayres did a hell of a good job in that," Evans enthused. "He was very nice to work with, too. He was a star when I was a little child. I had gone to see him in *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT*. That movie was something of a forerunner of *THE STEEL HELMET*. They were both very realistic and didn't glamorize war. They've been compared a lot over the years."

The drama of *DONOVAN'S BRAIN* was scripted and directed by Hollywood veteran Felix Feist, who had made the tidal-wave epic *DELUGE* 20 years earlier. In addition to Ayres and Evans, the intelligent, refreshingly underplayed psychological thriller costarred Nancy Davis (future first lady Nancy Reagan) as Ayres' concerned wife.

"I didn't know Felix before the picture, but I sure as hell knew him by the time it ended," Evans laughed. "We felt so sorry for each other. He did a great job, considering that he had to work for Nancy. She was terrible. She had not even a remote semblance of talent! It was like throwing a whole pitcher of cold milk on it when you're trying to build tension and suspense. And worse than not being talented was the fact that she thought she knew more than anybody else on the set! She was always telling the director how the thing should be done. He'd have to tell her, 'Nancy, this is a 15- or 20-day shoot. These walls are put up, and we have to live with them. We can't move things



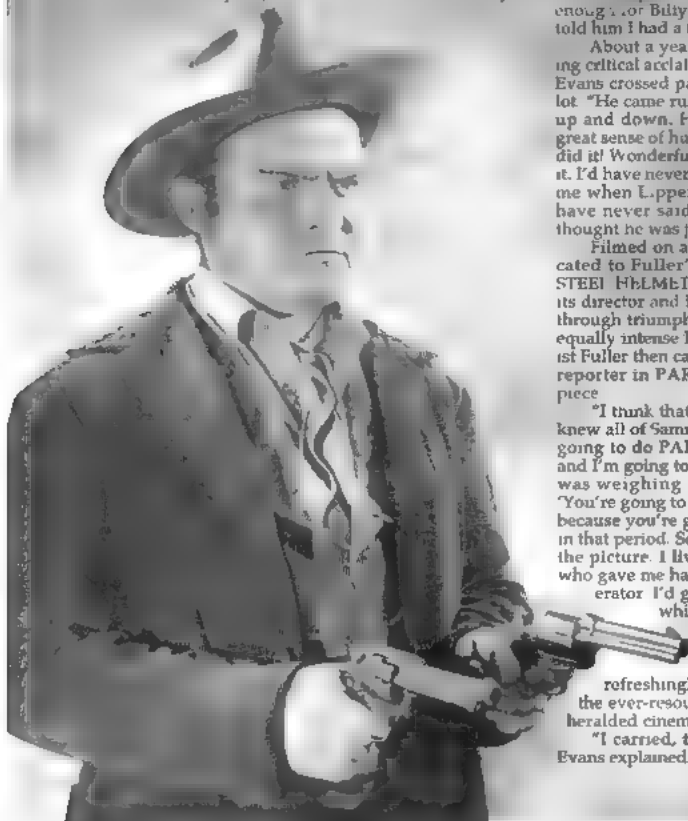
around.' Now, Lew had no problems with her. He just paid no attention to her!"

Additional delays arose on the set when, during the filming of a critical suspense scene, Feist asked Ayres and costar Evans to react to some of the low-budget production's rather rudimentary special effects. "We're leaning over this fish tank, and the brain's floating in it," Evans recalled. "It's this big, gloopy piece of rubber with this green light under it that's shining up through the thing. Felix would say, 'All right, now. I really want a reaction here, Gene. And Lew, keep up your energy.' We're watching it, and Lew says in this very serious voice, 'We'll soon know.' All of a sudden this green light starts glowing and the brain starts puffing up and throbbing. We cracked up, because it was the funniest-looking thing we'd ever seen. It looked like a big, pulsating pussy. I got hysterical and had to go sit down."

Throughout the remainder of the fifties, Evans alternated between memorable character roles in Westerns (1951's *SUGARFOOT* with Randolph Scott, 1958's *THE BRAVADOS* with Gregory Peck) and crime dramas (1955's *CRASHOUT*, 1958's *REVOLT IN THE BIG HOUSE*) and even some highly successful mainstream comedies (1957's *THE SAD SACK* with Jerry Lewis, 1959's *OPERATION PETTICOAT* with Cary Grant).

"Cary Grant and *OPERATION PETTICOAT* were wonderful—Key West and all those nurses," recalled Evans, who played one of the sailors aboard Grant's submarine. "We were staying in a place called the Blue Marlin. One morning I was in the office, and the laundry had come. I think it was \$8 and something. I had a little bundle. Actually, I think it was about six shorts and six T-shirts. Grant had come over to get Dina Merrill. He said to me, 'Gene, eight dollars and something for that little bit of laundry?' He said, 'Why don't you do like I do?' The first thing I do is go to Woolworth's, and I get two pairs of underpants. And I get two pairs of men's black silk stockings. At night you just go in there and wash them out and hang them over the shower curtain. In the morning they're dry, and you always have fresh underwear. I said, 'Well, Cary, I'd do that, but at night when I come in, I'm usually too drunk to find the wash basin.' And I thought to myself, 'That's how he got to be a damn multimillionaire!' But actually, what made him a multimillionaire was that picture—because he owned it. Tony Curtis was in that picture, too. We used to call him the Rich Kid."

Evans closed out the decade with the starring role in *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH* (1959), a British-lensed Atomic Age sci-fi thriller in which a dinosaur terrorizes London after being inadvertently rejuvenated by massive doses of radiation. "I never liked that kind of giant-monster picture—



PAGE 53: Gene Evans is best known to film fans for his starring role in Sam Fuller's *THE STEEL HELMET* (1951). BELOW: Evans made his fair share of Westerns, looking right at home with a pair of six-guns. RIGHT: Evans didn't think too much of 1959's *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH* (especially its title), but it remains a favorite among fans of monster movies. PAGE 55 LEFT: Professor James Birkford and Steve Karnes (Andre Morell and Gene Evans) track down *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH* with the help of Dr. Sampson (Jack MacGowran). PAGE 55 RIGHT: Karnes and a submarine officer (Maurice Kaufmann) zero in on *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH*.

Fuller said, 'How'd you do with Wilder?' And I said, 'I got along fine.' "

To Evans' immediate horror, Fuller casually asked Lippert to call Wilder, whose impeccable A-list credentials ranged from the *film noir* crime masterpiece *DOUBLE INDEMNITY* (1944) to Hollywood's gothic masterpiece, *SUNSET BOULEVARD* (1950).

"Now, if I had been in Lippert's position, I wouldn't have had the guts to call Billy Wilder, and I was banking that he wouldn't," Evans remembered. "What the hell business would Bob Lippert have calling Billy Wilder? We were in this shitty studio, about to do this low-budget film. But Lippert called Paramount, and they put him through! He said, 'Mr. Wilder, I hate to bother you, but it's very important to us. We're a little company. We're about to do a film, and we've got a young man here who's being considered for a very important role.' He tells me he just

finished doing a featured lead in *ACE IN THE HOLE*. He's a redheaded fellow—name's Gene Evans."

Evans' gut reaction led to a terrifying, inevitable conclusion: "Well, that's it." I thought "I'm dead." The crucial conversation ended quickly, and Lippert hung up the phone after talking to one of Hollywood's most respected and influential directors.

"By then I'm thinking it's all over," Evans continued. "Then Lippert looks at Fuller and says, 'Well, if he's good enough for Billy Wilder, he's good enough for us.' Wilder told him I had a featured role, which was shut—I had a bit!"

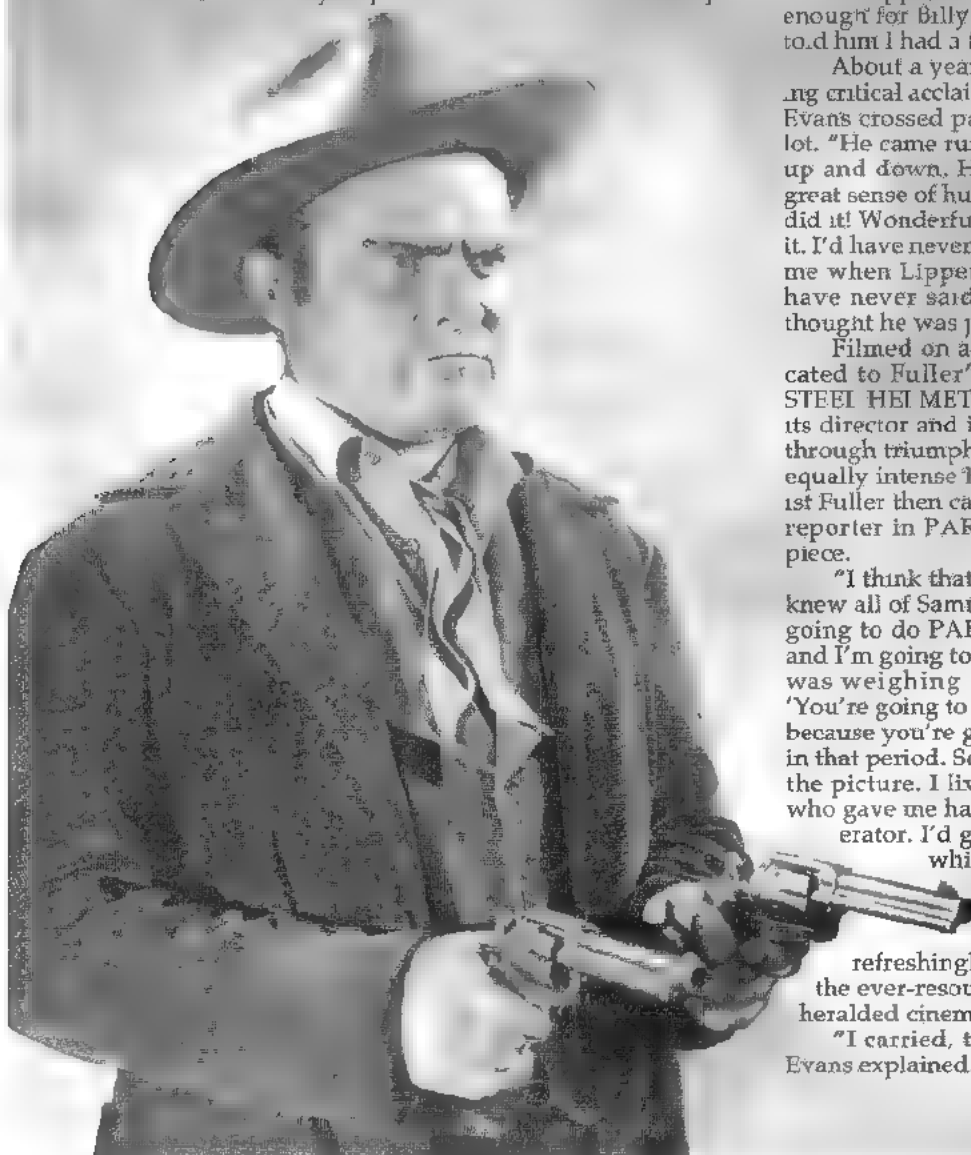
About a year later, with *THE STEEL HELMET* garnering critical acclaim and raking in healthy box-office returns, Evans crossed paths with Wilder on the Paramount studio lot. "He came running and jumping over, his head bobbing up and down. He's a funny little guy, you know, with a great sense of humor. He said, 'Gene! Gene! You did it! You did it! Wonderful!' And I said, 'Hell, I didn't do it. You did it. I'd have never gotten it if you hadn't decided to cover for me when Lippert put you in that position.' He said, 'I'd have never said that if I'd had any doubts.' Till then I thought he was just getting rid of the guy."

Filmed on a whirlwind eight-day schedule and dedicated to Fuller's beloved United States Infantry, *THE STEEL HELMET* became a landmark achievement for both its director and its star. The duo would follow their breakthrough triumph with a second Korean combat drama, the equally intense *FIXED BAYONETS* (1952). Former journalist Fuller then cast Evans as an 1880s New York newspaper reporter in *PARK ROW*, a gritty, gripping 1952 period piece.

"I think that's my favorite picture," Evans revealed. "I knew all of Sammy's stories, and he called and said, 'We're going to do *PARK ROW* next. I can't get financing for it, and I'm going to put my own money into it. So get ready.' I was weighing about 235 at the time. Sammy told me, 'You're going to have to lose some weight and get in shape, because you're going to wear those tight jackets they wore in that period. So I went from 235 to 170 by the time we did the picture. I lived on liquid Dexadrine. I knew a doctor who gave me half-gallon bottles, and I kept it in the refrigerator. I'd get up in the morning and take two belts of whiskey and a couple of shooters of that. Then I'd be ready to make them movies! I can't imagine how I lived through that."

Evans remembered *PARK ROW* as a refreshingly "different kind of picture" that allowed the ever-resourceful Fuller to introduce a number of unheralded cinematic innovations.

"I carried, to my knowledge, the first remote mike," Evans explained. "They put big battery packs in my pockets





and ran a wire down my pants and leg and out the sleeves of my shirt and everything. Then I had to do a fight outside a bar. It was the longest dolly shot ever done. They were on a little crab dolly, and they followed me across the street. It went through the horses and between the trolley car up the street. Then I had to fight, fight, fight. I got hold of a stunt man and bashed his head against the side of a big statue on the street. Oh, boy, it was a lot of misery. Then I had some dialogue. Just as I turned after doing this, the whole son of-a-bitch thing shorted out! Those battery packs gave me a hell of a whack!"

In addition to his essential early-fifties work with Fuller, the hard-living, hard-drinking Evans—who would abandon drugs and alcohol altogether in 1968—performed the substantial role of a boozy surgeon in DONOVAN'S BRAIN (1953), the best of three screen versions of the classic sci-fi novel by Curt Siodmak (screenwriter of Universal's 1941 horror masterpiece, THE WOLF MAN). Evans played the second lead role of Frank Schratt, a simple rural doctor who assists daring, radical scientist Patrick Cory (Lew Ayres, former star of MGM's Dr. Kildare movie series) in his relentless quest to keep alive the disembodied brain of a ruthless, sadistic millionaire. Over time, the evil industrialist's brain begins to assume control over the unsuspecting scientist's mind and actions, compelling him to commit sadistic and criminal acts.

"I thought Lew Ayres did a hell of a good job in that," Evans enthused. "He was very nice to work with, too. He was a star when I was a little child. I had gone to see him in ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT. That movie was something of a forerunner of THE STEEL HELMET. They were both very realistic and didn't glamorize war. They've been compared a lot over the years."

The drama of DONOVAN'S BRAIN was scripted and directed by Hollywood veteran Felix Feist, who had made the tidal-wave epic DELUGE 20 years earlier. In addition to Ayres and Evans, the intelligent, refreshingly underplayed psychological thriller costarred Nancy Davis (future first lady Nancy Reagan) as Ayres' concerned wife.

"I didn't know Felix before the picture, but I sure as hell knew him by the time it ended," Evans laughed. "We felt so sorry for each other. He did a great job, considering that he had to work for Nancy. She was terrible. She had not even a remote semblance of talent! It was like throwing a whole pitcher of cold milk on it when you're trying to build tension and suspense. And worse than not being talented was the fact that she thought she knew more than anybody else on the set! She was always telling the director how the thing should be done. He'd have to tell her, 'Nancy, this is a 15- or 20-day shoot. These walls are put up, and we have to live with them. We can't move things

around.' Now, Lew had no problems with her. He just paid no attention to her!"

Additional delays arose on the set when, during the filming of a critical suspense scene, Feist asked Ayres and costar Evans to react to some of the low-budget production's rather rudimentary special effects. "We're leaning over this fish tank, and the brain's floating in it," Evans recalled. "It's this big, globby piece of rubber with this green light under it that's shining up through the thing. Felix would say, 'All right, now. I really want a reaction here, Gene. And Lew, keep up your energy.' We're watching it, and Lew says in this very serious voice, 'We'll soon know.' All of a sudden this green light starts glowing and the brain starts puffing up and throbbing. We cracked up, because it was the funniest looking thing we'd ever seen. It looked like a big, pulsating pussy. I got hysterical and had to go sit down."

Throughout the remainder of the fifties, Evans alternated between memorable character roles in Westerns (1951's SUGARFOOT with Randolph Scott, 1958's THE BRAVADOS with Gregory Peck) and crime dramas (1955's CRASHOUT, 1958's REVOLT IN THE BIG HOUSE) and even some highly successful mainstream comedies (1957's THE SAD SACK with Jerry Lewis, 1959's OPERATION PETTICOAT with Cary Grant).

"Cary Grant and OPERATION PETTICOAT were wonderful—Key West and all those nurses," recalled Evans, who played one of the sailors aboard Grant's submarine. "We were staying in a place called the Blue Marlin. One morning I was in the office, and the laundry had come. I think it was \$8 and something. I had a little bundle. Actually, I think it was about six shorts and six T-shirts. Grant had come over to get Dina Merrill. He said to me, 'Gene, eight dollars and something for that little bit of laundry?' He said, 'Why don't you do like I do?' The first thing I do is go to Woolworth's, and I get two pairs of underpants. And I get two pairs of men's black silk stockings. At night you just go in there and wash them out and hang them over the shower curtain. In the morning they're dry, and you always have fresh underwear. I said, 'Well, Cary, I'd do that, but at night when I come in, I'm usually too drunk to find the wash basin.' And I thought to myself, 'That's how he got to be a damn multimillionaire!' But actually, what made him a multimillionaire was that picture—because he owned it. Tony Curtis was in that picture, too. We used to call him the Rich Kid."

Evans closed out the decade with the starring role in THE GIANT BEHEMOTH (1959), a British lensed Atomic Age sci-fi chiller in which a dinosaur terrorizes London after being inadvertently rejuvenated by massive doses of radiation. "I never liked that kind of giant-monster picture—



ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS and that sort of thing," Evans confessed. "I never watched any of those things. That's partially because I worked at Republic a good deal, and I knew a cameraman over there who was one of the best in the motion-picture business. He'd come over to lunch, then we'd get drunk and he'd go back to work. I'd go with him sometimes, and here he'd have a table up on sawhorses. On the table were hills and mountains and trees. Then he'd reach into a box and say, 'Now, we bring out the giant crab.' It was a crowd. He was going to set up this battle between these two crabs, and it took forever! I thought, 'God, this is brutal.' Myron Healey was always in those things. He was an old drinking buddy."

Evans starred in *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH* during an era in which he and several other veteran American character actors—including Brian Donlevy (who appeared in Hammer Films' first two Quatermass adaptations, 1956's *THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT* and 1957's *QUATERMASS 2*), Dean Jagger (1956's *X THE UNKNOWN*), Forrest Tucker (1958's *THE CRAWLING EYE*), and Howard Keel (1963's *DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS*)—journeyed across the Atlantic to lend stateside appeal and recognition to a stream of English thrillers.

"I did it because it meant I could see London with a little bit of money in my pocket," Evans confessed. "I worked all day at the studio, then partied all night. I didn't make a lot of money on that picture, but they gave me, I think, \$1,000 a week pocket money. At that time, that was a lot of money. Oh, Lordy, did we party!"

Filmed with higher production values than most monster-on-the-loose pictures of the era, *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH* project featured stop-motion animation sequences by special-effects wizard Willis O'Brien, the cinematic pioneer who masterminded the unforgettable title creatures in *THE LOST WORLD* (1925), *KING KONG* (1933), and *MIGHTY JOE YOUNG* (1949). "O'Brien was considered something of a genius at that kind of work, but most of his stuff was done after we finished. He'd set up certain angles and such, and the director, Eugene Lourie, met with him before we went over to do the picture. He left space and shot things at certain angles that would work with what O'Brien had in mind. It was all right, I guess. In one scene, we were in that two-man submarine, and I had to fire a radium-tipped torpedo directly into the monster's mouth. It looked like a giant dildo, propeller-driven."

In what would become O'Brien's final stop-motion feature, Evans starred as American marine biologist Steve Karnes, who teams up with British atomic scientist Professor Bickford (Andre Morell) to solve a series of mysterious deaths. Evans developed an instant rapport with Morell, the English character actor who, that same year, would play Dr. Watson opposite Peter Cushing's Sherlock Holmes in Hammer's color version of *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*, based on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's creepy mystery thriller. The actor would later be seen in Hammer's productions of *SHE* (1965), *PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES* (1966), and *THE MUMMY'S SHROUD* (1967).

"Andre was a good guy—a good actor, a good fellow, and a good drinker," Evans recalled. "He influenced me about something. To this day I keep Altoids around—Curi-

ously Strong Peppermints. He strongly suggested that actors should always carry some Altoids. I carried them to kill the voodoo breath. There was only one thing wrong with Andre—I could never understand a fucking word he said! I was so obviously American, and he felt, I think, that he had to carry the Union Jack. So he laid it on a little thick with the English accent. I'd say something, and he'd say, 'My dear fellow, mumble, mumble, mumble...' I'd just watch him, and when his lips stopped moving, I'd start talking again. I've got a tape of that movie, and I've played it several times. But I still can't understand him!"

As soon as shooting began on *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH*, Evans launched a campaign for producer David Diamond and director Lourie (a French set designer-turned-director who also helmed 1953's Ray Harryhausen dinosaur-from-the-depths chiller *THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS*, plus 1958's *THE COLOSSUS OF NEW YORK* and 1961's *GORG0*) to change the monster movie's awkward and potentially laughable title.

"I said, 'You can't call it *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH*,'" Evans recalled with lingering disgust. "Diamond said, 'Why not?' So I said, 'It's redundant. It's like saying 'The Rich Millionaire.' But he said, 'THE GIANT BEHEMOTH gets the message across.' I really thought *THE BEHEMOTH* would have more impact. It's from a passage from the Bible—'And the Lord said, behold thou, the behemoth.' So I just drank some more and just told myself, 'Nobody's going to see it anyway.'"

Evans was mistaken. Today *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH*—a lesser descendant of O'Brien's *LOST WORLD* and *KING KONG* and a thematic ancestor of such high-tech dinosaur blockbusters as

1993's *JURASSIC PARK*—is frequently hailed as a cult classic by sci-fi buffs and monster-movie connoisseurs. "People watch it over and over again, and I get more mail from that than anything else I've ever done! So what the hell? It makes people happy. And out of all the pictures I did, it's the only one that my grandson considers important."

Evans' final film with his screen mentor proved to be Sam Fuller's eerie, bizarre psychodrama, *SHOCK CORRIDOR* (1963), in which a journalist (played by Peter Breck, best-known for his role as Barbara Stanwyck's hotheaded son, Nick Barkley, on the sixties television Western *THE BIG VALLEY*) goes undercover in a mental institution, hoping to unmask a psychotic killer.

"I thought *SHOCK CORRIDOR* was very good, but I thought Breck was all wrong," Evans observed. "I never believed him for some reason, and that probably influenced my opinion. But if you look at that picture, there should be a prologue. This motion picture was made in 1963, and you have a black man in the Ku Klux Klan. In *STEEL HELMET*, you had Jimmy Edwards talking about having to ride in the back of a bus if he could even get on a bus. Fuller fought a lot of windmills, you know. He was always ahead of his time."

An offbeat, atmospheric, some would say campy thriller, the nightmarish *SHOCK CORRIDOR* features Evans in the demanding role of a nuclear scientist reduced to the mental level of a child. "Before I ever thought about getting into pictures, I read an article by Stanley Cortez, the great movie photographer. I didn't think I had any future



Hollywood Tough Guy



**LEFT:** As Sergeant Zack, Gene Evans led his weary men into the war that wasn't officially a war—the Korean War—in **THE STEEL HELMET**. **RIGHT:** Evans' last film for director Samuel Fuller was **SHOCK CORRIDOR** (1963)

in pictures, because I was redheaded and light-complected and had light eyes. When I grew up, movies were mainly black-and-white. In the story, Cortez said actors with dark hair and dark eyes photographed a lot better. When I worked with him on **SHOCK CORRIDOR**, I told him about that. I said, 'Look at me. How can you possibly use me?' He just smiled. Of course, they had improved lighting by then. When we did **SHOCK CORRIDOR**, Cortez hadn't photographed a film in years, but Fuller looked him up and got him. It was just a little quickie picture—it took about 10 days. But it's a classic."

For the remainder of the sixties and seventies, leading roles became fewer and fewer for Evans (who had also starred in a fifties television series, **MY FRIEND FLICKA**, based on the 1943 MGM movie starring Roddy McDowall). Yet Evans' screen work as a character actor, particularly in Westerns, continued to flourish. Highlights of that hectic era include roles opposite Steve McQueen (1966's **NEVADA SMITH**), John Wayne (1967's **THE WAR WAGON**), James Garner (1969's **SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SHERIFF**), and Kirk Douglas (1970's **THERE WAS A CROOKED MAN**). Evans also worked with one of Fuller's true kindred spirits, renegade screen director Sam Peckinpah, on the bold, unconventional Westerns **THE BALLAD OF CABLE HOGUE** (1970) and **PAT GARRETT AND BILLY THE KID** (1973).

"Peckinpah was a genius, but he was crazy as hell," Evans remembered. "He'd Sunday punch your head off if you didn't watch him. I did 10 or 12 pictures with him, including some early ones where he was a writer or a script supervisor. Sam didn't like to be told what to do, so he ended up spending more time fighting the studios than he did making movies. He knew he couldn't beat them, but by God he made it expensive for them. I stayed on **PAT GARRETT AND BILLY THE KID** two weeks longer than I had to because he wanted to keep me on the payroll."

The same year that he made **PAT GARRETT AND BILLY THE KID**, Evans enjoyed a sensational showcase role as a crooked redneck lawman in **WALKING TALL**, one of the biggest and most controversial box-office hits of 1973. The bloody, violent exploitation action thriller told the true-life story of a combative Tennessee sheriff, Buford Pusser (played by Joe Don Baker), and his eye-for-an-eye war against lawlessness and corruption. While filming this unexpected audience favorite on location in east Tennessee, Evans discovered a secluded lakeside paradise in the dense, unspoiled woods around Jackson.

"I did some chases right out along the road that leads to this place," Evans recalled. "I mashed a radiator on a police

*Continued on page 78*

**LEFT:** Evans starred as Rob McLaughlin opposite Anita Louise and Johnny Washbrook (as Nell and Ken McLaughlin) in the fifties TV favorite **MY FRIEND FLICKA**. **RIGHT:** More "police action" in **THE STEEL HELMET**.



# THE SHADOW OF FU MANCHU

The chimes of old Big Ben, London's historic clock, ring out. A sharp rap on a door is heard. The door creaks and warns of a stealthy entrance. A gasp and piercing screams. A shot is fired. The Yellow Peril Incarnate laughs terrifyingly and sends shivers through millions of listeners. And then, in coast, Dr. Fu Manchu, Mastermind of Crime, is on the air!



## MURDER BY RADIO

by Martin Grams, Jr.



Sax Rohmer's Oriental mysteries never made it to the top of the popularity charts, but fans of Fu Manchu can never get enough of him. His exploits were many, but documentation about the radio series has been cursory at best. Fu Manchu was brought to radio in five separate incarnations.

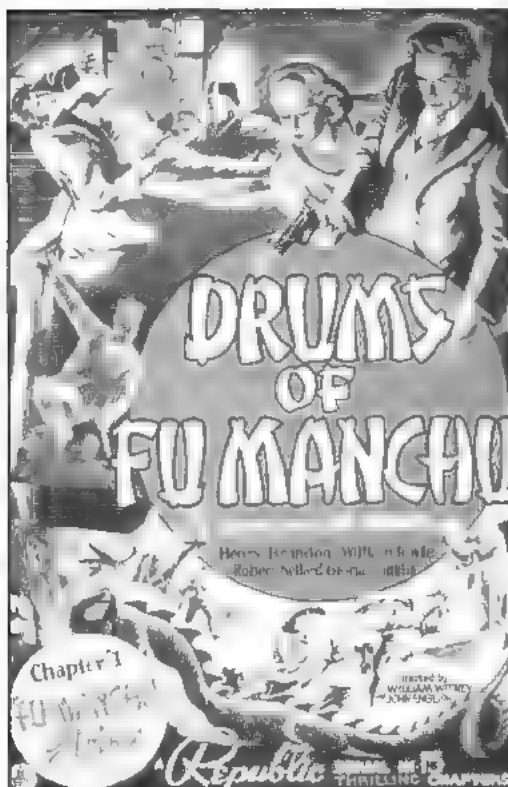
The first was *THE COLLIER HOUR*, broadcast over the NBC Blue Network in 1927. Designed to boost magazine subscriptions, this hour long program was divided into segments, each dramatizing a story or serial installment from the current issue of *Collier's*. The segments were introduced by a host called The Editor, portrayed through the years by John B. Kennedy, Phil Barrison, and Jack Arthur. Malcolm LaPrade created and produced the series; his brother Ernest LaPrade supplied the music scores. Directed by Colonel Davis, this series was a mere amateur performance, with music and sound effects improvised during rehearsals. Three separate serials were dramatized, based on those that appeared in *Collier's*: "The Day the World Ended" (12 installments, 5/1/29 to 7/17/29), "Daughter of Fu Manchu" (12 installments, 3/9/30 to 5/25/30), and "Yu an Hee See Laughs" (12 installments, 3/1/31 to 5/17/31).

Arthur Hughes played Fu Manchu (and also hosted as The Editor for a majority of these broadcasts). For the first year, *THE COLLIER HOUR* was broadcast on Wednesday evenings preceding publication of the magazine. Beginning in 1928, the program was broadcast on Sunday evenings following publication. According to the files at NBC, Sax Rohmer appeared in person on March 1, 1931 (often miscredited as May 1, 1931), for the premiere broadcast of "Yu'an Hee See Laughs." It's been suggested that "The Emperor of America" was another 12 chapter serial, broadcast circa 1927-28, but no information has been found to confirm it. *THE COLLIER HOUR* originated from New York radio stations and was heard only on the East Coast. Luckless listeners on the West Coast never had a chance to hear the first radio serials of Fu Manchu.

By far the most ambitious Rohmer adaptation was the second of the four series, this time recorded in the WBBM studios, and broadcast over the CBS Chicago affiliate, WGN. On Thursday, September 15, 1932, Sax Rohmer and his wife Elizabeth sailed from Southampton, bound for the Big Apple. On Wednesday, September 21, the White Star liner *Majestic* arrived in New York port. Mr. and Mrs. Rohmer stayed at the Ritz for a few days, and went sightseeing till Sunday the 25th, when Rohmer made one of his rare radio appearances for a 15-minute interview with CBS writer Steve Trumbull. The purpose of the interview was to publicize the radio series, which again was heard only on the East Coast, not the West. Within weeks, the program brought hundreds of positive letters to CBS, and a nationwide hookup was established so that certain stations on the West Coast could carry the program.

"I am deeply interested in radio and the dramatic technique," Rohmer commented, "which has been enormously developed on your [the American] side." Rohmer claimed crime was on the increase in England and attributed it largely to the influence of American crime and the fact that some American criminals had transferred their activity to London. He believed that Scotland Yard was capable enough when dealing with ordinary crimes, but frequently ineffective when faced with organized gangs.

On Monday, September 26, *FU MANCHU MYSTERIES* premiered on CBS radio, nationwide. (Unfortunately, no epi-



**PAGE 58: Boris Karloff played Sax Rohmer's infamous devil doctor in *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* (1932), a rare excursion into horror for MGM. ABOVE: Poster art for the 1940 chapterplay *DRUMS OF FU MANCHU*, with Henry Brandon. Both films retained Rohmer titles while dispensing with much of his plots.**

sodes are known to exist of the series.) Instead of a serial, the show presented a single 30-minute adventure. The opening episode (an adaptation of Rohmer's "The Zayat Kiss") varied slightly from the rest of the series, the drama lasting only 20 minutes instead of the customary 25. Introductory remarks and commercial credits usually took up the remaining five minutes, but the premiere instead featured a talk by Sax Rohmer.

Unlike the other Fu Manchu series, this one went all out for preparation and performances. The actors had to dress in full costume, and instead of the performance being acted out in a small sound studio, it was performed on stage before a live audience, recorded, and later broadcast via transcription. Sound effects were as au-

thentic as possible. The solemn notes of Big Ben and the background traffic noises of the Thames embankment were as true as could be, since they were actual recordings especially made and imported from England. G. Fred Ibbett, director of radio for the McCann-Erickson Company and in charge of the production, would have nothing but exact sound effects. He knew his native London, having been an engineer for the BBC previous to his service with NBC and CBS. When Nate Caldwell, with an option on the radio rights to Rohmer's mystery in his pocket, convinced Mr. Ibbett that Fu Manchu was a natural, the radio director readily agreed. Ibbett convinced the Campana Company to sponsor the dramas, and began a diligent search for the right actors and actresses to make Rohmer's characters spring realistically to life.

Most of the characters were British, with a wide variety of types required, and the problem of finding them in Chicago was a hard one to solve. From all corners of the world (if you can believe a 1932 CBS press release), even far off China itself, the cast was drawn. John C. Daly (as Dr. Fu Manchu) spoke French, Chinese, Arabian and Hindustani. Charles Warburton, one of the first to bring Shakespeare to radio (as Shylock), would play the role of Nayland Smith, the Devil Doctor's nemesis. A few years later, Warburton returned to the New York radio studios to star in 35 big dramatic programs, among them *SHERLOCK HOLMES*, *ENO CRIME CLUB*, and *K-7 SECRET SERVICE SPY STORY*. Karameneh, the slave girl, was enacted by Sunda Love, schooled in the William Owen Shakespearean Company, the University of Illinois, Northwestern, and the University of California. Stock company, club work, and local broadcasts prepared her for stardom in the CBS *FOREIGN LEGION* and *PHOTOPLAY* series.

Bob White, who played Smith's "Watson," Dr. Petrie, was born in England and experienced on the stage (Betty, his wife, was an experienced radio actress specializing in juvenile parts, and took an unbilled role in a couple of the *FU MANCHU* episodes.) When not excelling as Petrie, White headed his own successful radio-producing company.

Many hours were spent daily during the week preceding the Monday night broadcast, which took but 30 minutes air time. There was no music for the production, Ibbett explaining that "The chance of irritating the listener, instead of creating a mood fitting the play, is too great. I prefer to omit music which might distract from the setting." The actors performed their roles in costume, so that fans could attend the stage performances and be thrilled by the spectacle of the Oriental settings. (During the early productions, Ibbett drafted plans for the scenery and lighting effects, for the purpose of allowing the audience to attend the "horror chambers" of the criminal mastermind.)

Partway through the series John C. Daly (not, by the way, the John Charles Daly of television's *WHAT'S MY LINE?*)

(name) was replaced by Harold Huber, and Sandra Love was replaced by Charlotte Manson. In the thirties, Huber became a popular character player for Warner Bros., as well as a radio actor (He is also known to Charlie Chan fans for playing police inspectors of various nationalities in the 20th Century Fox Chan film series.) Huber also wrote radio scripts for SUSPENSE in 1943 and 1944. Sponsored by Campana Balm, Helen Earle and Urban Johnson supplied the sound effects.

THE MANCHU MYSTERIES ran for a total of 31 half-hour programs, heard Monday evenings at 8:45pm. It lasted until April 24, 1935.

During the thirties, the pirate commercial radio programs transmitted from the European continent had vast English audiences. By law, the British Broadcasting Corporation had a complete monopoly on radio transmission with a British license was charged by its license holders, and by the British Parliament, with the task of providing radio entertainment for all tastes. Commercial radio, banned in Britain and able to operate only from transmitters on the Continent, capitalized on this situation. With the financial backing of sponsors such as Ponds, Colgate-Palmolive, and other large firms, the pirate stations attracted quality writers and performers to provide showcases for their talents, which the BBC could not match. From the inception of their transmissions until they were closed down in the late thirties, the pirate BBC stations in Luxembourg, Normandy, Lyons, and Toulouse offered a continuous flow of high-quality entertainment. In 1936, Radio Luxembourg decided to feature a series of mystery adventures built around a single character. This series would originally be written and supervised by Sax Rohmer himself.

"Sax himself wrote the scripts during the first half of the series," Rohmer biographer Cay Van Ash recalled. "When the series continued beyond his original expectations, he found it too great an imposition on his time. He continued to write some of the scripts but others were written either by Elizabeth or myself. I came in on only the last six months or so of the project. I had first met Sax in November 1935, and he had had my education in hand for just over a year. Whether the draft scripts were written by Elizabeth or by me, they were carefully edited afterwards by Sax, for which reason I described the series in *Master of Villainy* as the most faithful version broadcast. The adaptation was not a very difficult job. I don't recall that any particular selection of episodes was made. As I remember it, we just went straight through the books in their natural sequence. The dialogue did not require changing very much. On the other hand, we did our utmost to avoid narration and to translate action directly into dialogue or sound. This often required additional material, and I think we also used a great many more sound effects than there were in the American *SHADOW OF FU MANCHU* radio series."

Frank Cochrane, who played the Luxembourg-broadcast *Fu Manchu*, was a distinguished stage actor and eminently suited to play the part. He had lived for many years in China, studying the native habits and mental makeup. He had also played innumerable Chinese roles on the stage. (Cochrane had won acclaim for the part of The Cobbler in the long-running show *CHU-CHIN CHOW*.)

"*Fu Manchu*," Cochrane said in a 1937 interview.

"There is only one female role in *DR FU MANCHU*," Frank Cochrane said. "This is the part of the heroine. The girl who takes this character, Karameneh, is Rani Walker. She's brilliant. There is a good cast in these programs, all exceptionally good actors, and with Rani the only female role—who, as I have said, is excellent. It's a well-balanced cast."

"has a definite personality, and a definite purpose. He is a keen wit and possesses a quick Oriental brain. He is a demon for power and wants to mold the world to his way of direction and thinking. The adventures of Dr. Fu Manchu are full of unlikely happenings, which have been so well treated that they convince the listener as being highly probable. Before settling down to listen, I suggest you turn out the lights in the room the moment you hear the gong, and take your mind into serious channels. This will help you enormously to catch the illusion."

All of the BBC recordings were produced in London. There were no live broadcasts. (It's believed that Rohmer and the crew recorded the shows at a disused theater.) The leading light in the operation was producer Eddie Pola, who also took part as an actor in some episodes. There was actually a plan to follow up the 52 *Fu Manchu* broadcasts with a series adapted from Rohmer's *The Quest of the Sacred Slipper* (1919). Cay Van Ash distinctly remembering having written the first two episodes. However, the BBC exerted legal pressure to close down the rival operation, so it came to nothing.

D.A. Clarke-Smith, a well-known stage actor who had appeared in Rohmer's stage plays *THE EYE OF SIVA* and *SECRET EGYPT*, played the role of Nayland Smith. "I'm getting hardened to it now, but the nerve strain is still almost unbelievable," commented Clarke-Smith, as the atmosphere in the studio grew more intense with each passing minute. "I have to talk so fast, knowing all the time that one wrong word would spoil the show. Meanwhile, six or seven prop men are grouped round another make, to provide the dramatic effects. And, when I'm supposed to be swimming for my life in a swirling river, I have to try to forget that at the other mike a man is vigorously shaking a half-filled hot-water bottle."

The program's producer, swift-thinking Eddie Pola, rehearsed three radio installments in the space of two hours. "Funniest thing, rehearsing one dramatic scene," recalled Eddie, "was when we came to the line, 'Shoot the man at the window.' The effects man fired the gun, but it just didn't go off. Again we repeated, 'Shoot the man at the window.' Again the gun refused to function. We tried again. 'Shoot the man at the window.' But still the gun was silent. 'Oh, cut his throat,' I said. And at that moment, the gun went off and nearly blew me out of my skin!"

"There is only one female role in *DR FU MANCHU*," Frank Cochrane said. "This is the part of the heroine. The girl who takes this character, Karameneh, is Rani Walker. She's brilliant. There is a good cast in these programs, all exceptionally good actors, and with Rani the only female role—who, as I have said, is excellent. It's a well-balanced cast."

The supporting cast who performed the incidental character parts included Arthur Young, Mervyn Johns (father of actress Glynis Johns), and Vernon Kelso. As was common in radio drama, the actors often took several parts in the same episode and program, and sometimes switched



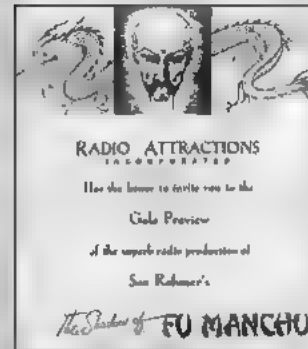
PAGE 60 Christopher Lee starred in *THE FACT OF FU MANCHU* (1965), the first of his five turns as the Yellow Peril Incarnate. Neither this film nor its sequels were based on an actual Sax Rohmer novel. Publicity for the radio serial *THE SHADOW OF FU MANCHU* included (LEFT) a "mystic keys puzzle" put out by WFBR in Baltimore, (CENTER) a gala premiere, and (RIGHT) *Fu Manchu* matches. The cover is striking, and the matches themselves were tiny Fu's with ignitable heads.

roles whenever necessary. For example, in Episode 43, Arthur Young portrayed Dr. Fu Manchu, Inspector Weymouth, and Sir Frank Narcombe, while Vernon Kelso took on three other parts.

With the completion of the *Fu Manchu* series, Cochrane and Clarke-Smith were rated such a successful team that they were featured in another long-running series of radio plays, this time concerning Inspector Brooks of Scotland Yard. Clarke-Smith played the Inspector, while Cochrane played the—perhaps inevitably—Chinese villain, La Sante.

In 1939, another lengthier *Fu Manchu* program was produced, probably the most popular of them all. This was a series of 156 15-minute episodes, under the overall title *THE SHADOW OF FU MANCHU*. The series was recorded transcribed, and released through Fields Brothers in Hollywood. After the recordings were completed, all 156 episodes were pressed and copied onto transcription discs, and distributed to radio stations across the country. This allowed the stations to play the episodes in any time slot they wanted. Soane presented the series on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, while others broadcast on all five weekdays.

Ted Osborne played Dr. Fu Manchu with Hanley Stafford as Nayland Smith, Gale Gordon (the future Osgood Conklin on radio and TV's *OUR MISS BROOKS*), and a mainstay of every Lucille Ball series after *I LOVE LUCY*) as Dr. James Petrie, Paula Winslowe as Karameneh, and Edmund O'Brien as Inspector Rymer. It has not been confirmed whether O'Brien or Gerald Mohr was the announcer. (It was common for radio announcers to double in acting roles, which would give credence to the claim that it was O'Brien, but until someone turns up a recorded interview with either actor providing that information, or can find the original scripts, neither name should be taken as gospel.) Frank Nelson (the unctuous



salesman/train conductor/whatever of many Jack Benny shows) and Norman Fields played supporting roles.

The first 40 episodes of *THE SHADOW OF FU MANCHU* are available on audio cassette from Radio Spirits. The adaptation is quite faithful to the original books, though in the middle of the series the episodes occur in somewhat jumbled order. Episodes #1 to #21, for example, come from *The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu* (1913), #22 to #27 from *The Hand of Fu-Manchu* (1917), and #28 to #29 from *The Return of Dr. Fu-Manchu* (1916). Episode #40 begins *Fu Manchu's Bride* (1933).

Many sources wrongly list the 1939-40 *Fu Manchu* series as a 77 or 78 episode broadcast run. The reality is that 156 were actually recorded and aired. Four separate serials, each composed of more than one Sax Rohmer story, were recorded. Each ran 39 consecutive installments. (This is why some collectors never bother with the 40th episode and often miscredit the available episodes as only 39.) It's been rumored for the past two decades that discs of the other three serials are in existence, but not yet released in circulation, being held on to by a profit-hungry collector. The rumor is partially true: A collector of Big Band programs in Niles, Ohio came across a huge stack of 16-inch transcription discs and, among them, were many of the episodes from the third and fourth serials of *THE SHADOW OF FU MANCHU*. Neither serial is complete. Sixteen episodes are missing from the third serial, and 15 from the fourth, making only half of the episodes for each serial available. (The collector's original offer was \$2,500 for the stack, but having chatted with him over the phone, I've learned that the price has been recently lowered. I can vouch for the shows' existence. *Fu Manchu* fans will probably jump for joy knowing the discs actually survive, but unless someone decides to invest the large financial sum, those episodes will probably never be heard.)



cast was a onetime presentation *THE MOLLY MYSTERY THEATER* was an anthology series, aired over a decade under different titles. The program featured the best in mystery and detective stories, all adaptations of short stories, stage plays, and novels by such stalwarts as Raymond Chandler, Jack London, W.W. Jacobs, Rufus King, and Craig Rice. On Tuesday, October 3, 1944, from 9:00 to 9:30pm, *The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu* was dramatized originating from NBC studios in New York. The program was narrated by Roy Rogers and selected by Geoffrey Barnes (the on-the-air pseudonym of Bernard Lenrow, who had recently played Doc Savage, Man of Bronze, in a series that ended in June 1943). Jack Miller supplied the music. A few publications and websites incorrectly list this episode with an August 1944 broadcast date. However, the October date is official; it originates from the original script held at NBC Studios in New York, where the *MOLLY* scripts are housed.

Will Dr. Fu Manchu ever return to the airwaves? Well, Sherlock Holmes does to this day, so we can only hope.

fame) was replaced by Harold Huber, and Sundra Love was replaced by Charlotte Manson. In the thirties, Huber became a popular character player for Warner Bros., as well as a radio actor (He is also known to Charlie Chan fans for playing police inspectors of various nationalities in the 20th Century Fox Chan film series.) Huber also wrote radio scripts for SUSPENSE in 1943 and 1944. Sponsored by Campana Balm, Helen Earle and Urban Johnson supplied the sound effects.

FU MANCHU MYSTERIES ran for a total of 31 half-hour programs, heard Monday evenings at 8.45pm. It lasted until April 24, 1933.

During the thirties, the pirate commercial radio programs transmitted from the European continent had vast English audiences. By law, the British Broadcasting Corporation had a complete monopoly on radio transmission within Britain, and was charged by its license holders, and by the British Parliament, with the task of providing radio entertainment for all tastes. Commercial radio, banned in Britain and able to operate only from transmitters on the Continent, capitalized on this situation. With the financial backing of sponsors such as Ponds, Co. gate-Palmolive, and other large firms, the pirate stations attracted quality writers and per-

formers to provide showcases for their talents, which the BBC could not match. From the inception of their transmissions until they were closed down in the late thirties, the pirate IBC stations in Luxembourg, Normandy, Lyons, and Toulouse offered a continuous flow of high-quality entertainment. In 1936, Radio Luxembourg decided to feature a series of mystery adventures built around a single character. This series would originally be written and supervised by Sax Rohmer himself.

"Sax himself wrote the scripts during the first half of the series," Rohmer biographer Cay Van Ash recalled. "When the series continued beyond his original expectations, he found it too great an imposition on his time. He continued to write some of the scripts, but others were written either by Elizabeth or myself. I came in on only the last six months or so of the project. I had first met Sax in November 1935, and he had had my education in hand for just over a year. Whether the draft scripts were written by Elizabeth or by me, they were carefully edited afterwards by Sax, for which reason I described the series in *Master of Villainy* as the most faithful version broadcast. The adaptation was not a very difficult job. I don't recall that any particular selection of episodes was made. As I remember it, we just went straight through the books in their natural sequence. The dialogue did not require changing very much.

On the other hand, we did our utmost to avoid narration and to translate action directly into dialogue or sound. This often required additional material, and I think we also used a great many more sound effects than there were in the American SHADOW OF FU MANCHU radio series."

Frank Cochrane, who played the Luxembourg-broadcast Fu Manchu, was a distinguished stage actor and eminently suited to play the part. He had lived for many years in China, studying the native habits and mental makeup. He had also played innumerable Chinese roles on the stage. (Cochrane had won acclaim for the part of The Cobbler in the long-running show CHU-CHIN-CHOW.)

"Fu Manchu," Cochrane said in a 1937 interview,

"has a definite personality, and a definite purpose. He is a keen wit and possesses a quick Oriental brain. He is a demon for power and wants to mold the world to his way of direction and thinking. The adventures of Dr. Fu Manchu are full of unlikely happenings, which have been so well treated that they convince the listener as being highly probable. Before settling down to listen, I suggest you turn out the lights in the room the moment you hear the gong, and take your mind into serious channels. This will help you enormously to catch the illusion."

All of the IBC recordings were produced in London. There were no live broadcasts. (It's believed that Rohmer and the crew recorded the shows at a disused theater.) The leading light in the operation was producer Eddie Pola, who also took part as an actor in some episodes. There was actually a plan to follow up the 52 Fu Manchu broadcasts with a series adapted from Rohmer's *The Quest of the Sacred Slipper* (1919). Cay Van Ash distinctly remembering having written the first two episodes. However, the BBC exerted legal pressure to close down the rival operation, so it came to nothing.

D.A. Clarke Smith, a well-known stage actor who had appeared in Rohmer's stage plays THE EYE OF SIVA and SECRET EGYPT, played the role of Nayland Smith. "I'm getting hardened to it now, but the nerve strain is still almost unbelievable," commented Clarke-Smith, as the atmosphere in the studio grew more intense with each passing minute. "I have to talk so fast, knowing all the time that one wrong word would spoil the show. Meanwhile, six or seven prop men are grouped round another mike to provide the dramatic effects. And, when I'm supposed to be swimming for my life in a swirling river, I have to try to forget that at the other mike a man is vigorously shaking a half-filled hot-water bottle."

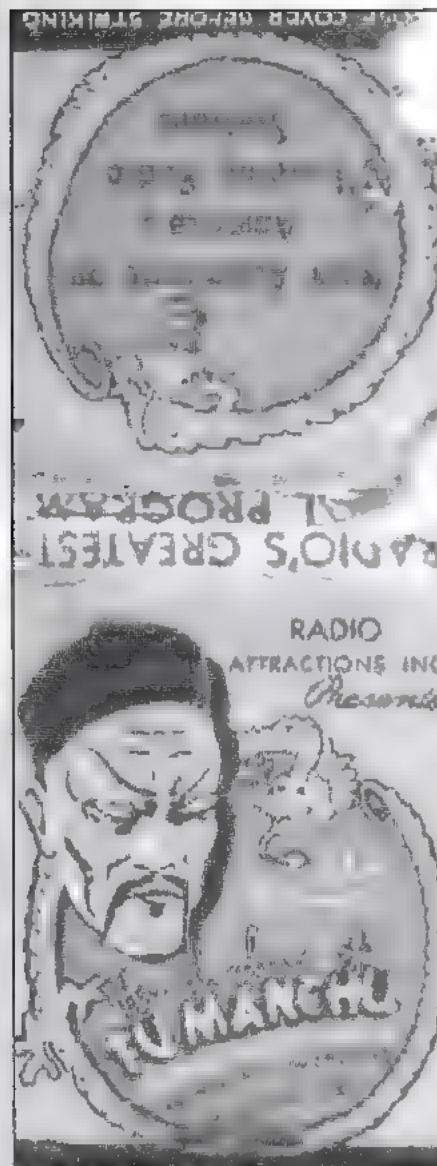
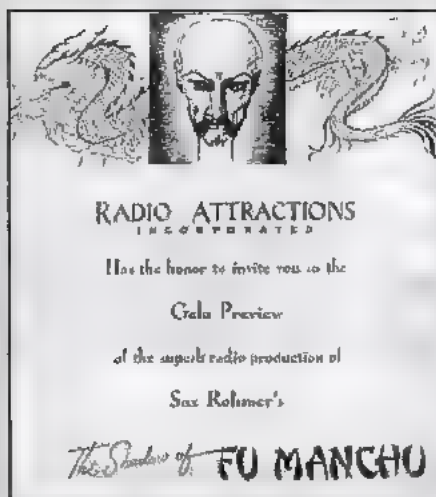
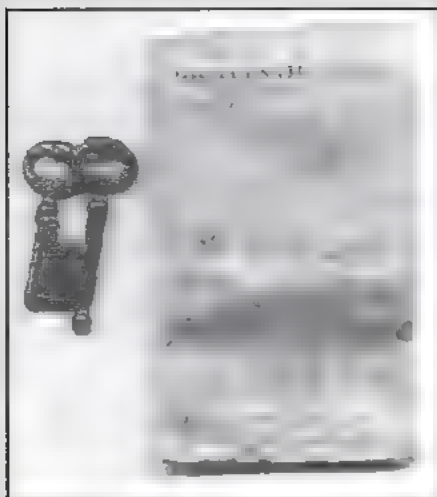
The program's producer, swift thinking Eddie Pola, rehearsed three radio installments in the space of two hours. "Funniest thing, rehearsing one dramatic scene," recalled Eddie, "was when we came to the line, 'Shoot the man at the window.' The effects man fired the gun, but it just didn't go off. Again we repeated, 'Shoot the man at the window.' Again the gun refused to function. We tried again 'Shoot the man at the window!' But still the gun was silent. 'Oh, cut his throat,' I said. And at that moment, the gun went off and nearly blew me out of my skin!"

"There is only one female role in DR. FU MANCHU," Frank Cochrane said. "This is the part of the heroine. The girl who takes this character, Karameneh, is Rani Walker. She's brilliant! There is a good cast in these programs, all exceptionally good actors, and with Rani in the only female role—who, as I have said, is excellent. It is a well-balanced cast."

The supporting cast who performed the incidental character parts included Arthur Young, Mervyn Johns (father of actress Glynis Johns), and Vernon Kelso. As was common in radio drama, the actors often took several parts in the same episode and program, and sometimes switched







PAGE 60: Christopher Lee starred in *THE FACE OF FU MANCHU* (1965) the first of his five turns as the Yellow Peril Incarnate. Neither this film nor its sequels were based on an actual Sax Rohmer novel. Publicity for the radio serial *THE SHADOW OF FU MANCHU* included (LEFT) a "mystic keys puzzle" put out by WFBZ in Baltimore, (CENTER) a gala premiere, and (RIGHT) Fu Manchu matches. The cover is striking, and the matches themselves were tiny Fu's with ignitable heads.

roles whenever necessary. For example, in Episode 43, Arthur Young portrayed Dr. Fu Manchu, Inspector Weymouth, and Sir Frank Narcombe, while Vernon Kelso took on three other parts.

With the completion of the Fu Manchu series, Cochrane and Clarke-Smith were rated such a successful team that they were featured in another long running series of radio plays, this time concerning Inspector Brooks of Scotland Yard. Clarke-Smith played the Inspector, while Cochrane played the—perhaps inevitably—Chinese villain, La Sante.

In 1939, another, lengthier Fu Manchu program was produced, probably the most popular of them all. This was a series of 156 15-minute episodes, under the overall title *THE SHADOW OF FU MANCHU*. The series was recorded, transcribed, and released through Fields Brothers in Hollywood. After the recordings were completed, all 156 episodes were pressed and copied onto transcription discs, and distributed to radio stations across the country. This allowed the stations to play the episodes in any time slot they wanted. Some presented the series on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, while others broadcast on all five weekdays.

Ted Osborne played Dr. Fu Manchu, with Hanley Stafford as Nayland Smith, Cale Gordon (the future Osgood Conklin on radio and TV's *OUR MISS BROOKS*), and a mainstay of every Lucille Ball series after *I LOVE LUCY* as Dr. James Petrie, Paula Winslowe as Karameneh, and Edmund O'Brien as Inspector Rymer. It has not been confirmed whether O'Brien or Gerald Mohr was the announcer. (It was common for radio announcers to double in acting roles, which would give credence to the claim that it was O'Brien, but until someone turns up a recorded interview with either actor providing that information, or can find the original scripts, neither name should be taken as gospel.) Frank Nelson (the unctuous

salesman/train conductor/whatever of many Jack Benny shows) and Norman Fields played supporting roles.

The first 40 episodes of *THE SHADOW OF FU MANCHU* are available on audio cassette from Radio Spirits. The adaptation is quite faithful to the original books, though in the middle of the series the episodes occur in somewhat jumbled order. Episodes #1 to #21, for example, come from *The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu* (1913), #22 to #27 from *The Hand of Fu-Manchu* (1917), and #28 to #29 from *The Return of Dr. Fu-Manchu* (1916). Episode #40 begins *Fu Manchu's Bride* (1933).

Many sources wrongly list the 1939-40 Fu Manchu series as a 77 or 78 episode broadcast run. The reality is that 156 were actually recorded and aired. Four separate serials, each composed of more than one Sax Rohmer story, were recorded. Each ran 39 consecutive installments. (This is why some collectors never bother with the 40th episode and often miscredit the available episodes as only 39.) It's been rumored for the past two decades that discs of the other three serials are in existence, but not yet released in circulation, being held on to by a profit-hungry collector. The rumor is partially true. A collector of Big Band programs in Niles, Ohio came across a huge stack of 16-inch transcription discs and, among them, were many of the episodes from the third and fourth serials of *THE SHADOW OF FU MANCHU*. Neither serial is complete. Sixteen episodes are missing from the third serial, and 15 from the fourth, making only half of the episodes for each serial available. (The collector's original offer was \$2,500 for the stack, but having chatted with him over the phone, I've learned that the price has been recently lowered. I can vouch for the shows' existence. Fu Manchu fans will probably jump for joy knowing the discs actually survive, but unless someone decides to invest the large financial sum, those episodes will probably never be heard.)

The fourth and final Fu Manchu broadcast was a onetime presentation. *THE MOLLE MYSTERY THEATER* was an anthology series, aired over a decade under different titles. The program featured the best in mystery and detective stories, all adaptations of short stories, stage plays, and novels by such stalwarts as Raymond Chandler, Jack London, W.W. Jacobs, Rufus King, and Craig Rice. On Tuesday, October 3, 1944, from 9:00 to 9:30pm, *The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu* was dramatized, originating from NBC studios in New York. The program was narrated by Roc Rogers and selected by Geoffrey Barnes (the on-the-air pseudonym of Bernard Lenrow, who had recently played Doc Savage, Man of Bronze in a series that ended in June 1943). Jack Miller supplied the music. A few publications and websites incorrectly list this episode with an August 1944 broadcast date. However, the October date is official; it originates from the original script held at NBC Studios in New York, where the *MOLLE* scripts are housed.

Will Dr. Fu Manchu ever return to the airwaves? Well, Sherlock Holmes does to this day, so we can only hope...



# AROUS AND PSYCHE THE BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS

by Erich Kuersten

Ask yourself what is the quintessential fifties Disembodied Brain movie and **THE BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS** (1958) probably doesn't leap out at you—and yet there is none better. It doesn't leap, because it's so good that leaping is unnecessary. Stocked with such favorite B movie staples as Ken Terrell, Bill Giorgio, and Thomas Browne Henry, giant floating brains with eyes, authentic nuclear test footage, model airplane explosions, Bronson Canyon, and John Agar, it simply has everything—"simply" being the key word. But lurking beneath its idyllic surface lies a message of pro-feminist nonaggression that's astoundingly subversive for its time . . .

The story follows American research scientist Steve March (played to pipe-smoking perfection by Agar) and his assistant, Dan (Robert Fuller, later star of TV's **EMERGENCY**), who work in a small desert lab uncomfortably near the site of atomic-bomb tests. Nearby lives Sally Fallon, Steve's fiancée (Joyce Meadows), and her father, John Fallon (B-movie authority staple Henry.) While investigating signs of radioactivity in a nearby cave, Gor (played by himself, voiced by Dale Tate), a giant evil brain from the planet Arous, kills Dan and invades the mind of Steve. Returning home, "Gor as Steve" frightens Sally with some unusually aggressive smooching.

Vol (played by himself, voiced by Dale Tate), a good brain from Arous, later appears to Sally and her father, calmly explaining the situation and his plan to inhabit the body of Sally's dog in order to stop Gor's evil scheme of dominating Earth (and Sally.) Later still, Gor/Steve again tries to force himself on Sally, wooing her with the promise of wealth beyond her wildest dreams.

Come Friday, Steve/Gor shows an assembled panel of military brass his prowess by blowing up their nuclear test site. He demands that representatives of all the major countries gather that evening and destroys a plane for a further

demonstration. Exhausted, Steve and his evil inhabitant return home.

Meanwhile, Sally has learned how to kill Gor from her dog—that is, from Vol. She's left instructions on a piece of paper for Steve to find when Gor leaves his body to take his daily oxygen. Steve gets the note and kills Gor. Vol heads back to Arous and leaves Sally on her own to explain to a disbelieving Steve how she knew about the fissure of Rolando.

One of the reasons **THE BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS** works so well is its economy of storytelling. For example, Sally and her father instantly take the good brain, Vol, at his word. No time is wasted in disbelief, after all, if you can't trust a giant brain from another planet, whom can you trust? When Sally and Dad suggest bringing in the military, Vol simply states, "The military would do no good"—thereby saving the budget many dollars and viewers much needless stock footage. This technique also succeeds in giving the film a distinct "personality." No large sets or impersonal narration compromise the importance of character. Simple props are used ingeniously for effects. Agar's face is distorted through a water cooler to indicate his transformation. A vital meeting of foreign dignitaries (we know they're foreign because one guy's wearing a turban) convenes around a table in a room smaller than Steve's lab—the personal on equal footing with the political; why, it's downright Marxist! **THE BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS** is one movie that strikes a truly resonant chord between limited funds and grand ambition. Compare it with a similar movie—for instance, Roger Corman's **IT CONQUERED THE WORLD** (1956)—where again, liaisons with a megalomaniacal space entrepreneur are the sole jurisdiction of a regular guy who swings by top secret military installations in his convertible, a fifties fantasia in which the fate of the world is in the hands of your future father and



**LEFT** Sally Fallon (Joyce Meadows) chats on the phone while her dog (who is inhabited by a Giant Brain from the Planet Arous named Vol) eavesdrops. Got that? There may be a test. **RIGHT:** Sally and her father, John Fallon (Thomas Browne Henry) find the body of Dan Murphy (Robert Fuller), killed by an Evil Giant Brain from the Planet Arous named Gor. We're not making this up! **BELOW:** The Evil Brain Gor attacks Steve March (John Agar) and inhabits him, no dogs being readily to hand . . .

his golf buddies as they sip lemonade and eat your future mom's cooking around the backyard barbecue. (Photos of these barbecues doubtless show up in Fox Mulder's family albums.) Unlike Corman's movie, however, the threat in *AROUS* is not from some cold, dehumanizing force, but from a single individual in pursuit of personal power—ostracized from his own, peaceful home planet, a rogue capitalist in a world without greed.

The introduction of this malignant presence into the idyllic landscape of Fab Fifties America is as inevitable as the apple into the Garden of Eden. Without Gor, there is no sex; without death, no life. When we first meet Sally, Steve greets her in such an offhanded way you'd think she was his sister! Indeed, he seems to have no real sexual desire for her until he returns from his desert trip a new man, possessed of Gor's cold intellect and fiery passion. (Up until now, he's been purely lukewarm.) Sally is initially excited by the sudden change in his kissing style—"You should stay away more often," she says, breathlessly—but of course, he takes it too far, too fast, and scares her off. She is receptive to sexual stimulus, but repelled at the same time. Like *Psyche* in the *Eros/Psyche* myth, she longs for an awakening into sexual consciousness, but is repulsed by it at the same time.

The name of Gor and Vol's home planet, Arous, can be interpreted as meaning "arouse" and "eros." Gor is aroused by sex and power. Vol on the other hand, acts as a passive, erocentric opposite to Gor's phallocentric drive. Vol never actually does anything. He claims he is stronger than Gor, but never once demonstrates his power, preferring to sit dem-onstrates his power, preferring to sit around in Sally's dog. He becomes Sally's feminine intuition and conscience, an interplanetary Jiminy Cricket, her "familiar" . . .

While most female characters (as in the work of Howard Hawks) have to learn to be "one of the guys," to earn respect, Sally stays within her "womanly" boundaries as defined by the period, remaining always caring and warm with Steve even though she knows (from Vol, her feminine intuition) that he's really Gor. As she strives to appear to be the same loving gal she's always been, Sally strengthens her own

values, showing genuine sympathy for the errant brain from Arous, even as she is silently disgusted. She functions eloquently on several levels, extracting information about his plans, resisting his sexual advances (but not too much), and even attempting to dissuade him from his pursuit of power, all while never losing her veneer of unquestioning adoration. She treads a path much closer to the reality of fifties dating than most movies of the period will walk. (In its markedly pessimistic examination of relationships, *BRAIN* is the "singles scene" companion piece to the bleak 1958 sci-fi opus *I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE*.) Meadows conveys the affection Sally shows for Gor as something more than acting, even while revealing the strain such a performance is taking on her nerves. Though romancing the alien might kill her, the erocentric Eden of which she is ruler knows no limits in its nurturing. Even the invader from space gets a peck on the cheek and

a hammock to nap in before the big hostile takeover. Sally recognizes a scared little boy buried under Gor's bravado, while buried under her own good-girl veneer is a woman secretly drawn to Gor's aggressive sexuality.

The relationship between Gor and Sally is the real romance of the film. **THE BRAIN**







FROM PLANET AROUS can even be seen as a "woman's picture." While Sally's conscious goal is to keep her idyllic backyard reverie status quo, she also wants to get married and start putting together a nuclear family—with a bang. She wants some action, dammit, and Gor provides that. Gor, on the other hand, finds his lust for Sally evolving into something beyond mere physical desire. When he senses that he is really hurting her, he stops, putting off his sexual advances until after marriage, which in turn is put off until after world conquest. Gor transmutes his sexual desire into the pursuit of power and domination, attempting to seduce her with promises of "wealth and power beyond imagination."

"Is that what you want?" she asks.

"That's what everybody wants," he says. "The office boy wants to be the boss. The private the general." Gor tries to seduce Sally by cloaking his megalomania in the rhetoric of the American dream—Horatio Alger by way of Nietzsche. What a far cry Gor is from the tionless invading automatons of such *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*. He's a ruthless industrialist hell-bent on this island Earth not to serve his home planet, but to enslave it! He even promises mankind freedom again after they help him—a sort of global retirement package, or Social Security! Even Sally must admit that Gor's mad dream is not out of the ordinary "for a man" of his time. Even if she eventually frees Steve from Gor's influence, he may still succumb to the same pursuit of wealth, just another rat-race

**TOP LEFT:** The military gathers to hear the ultimatum of **THE BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS** (1958). **CENTER LEFT:** Sally reacts accordingly when she finds the body of Sheriff Wiley Pane (Tim Graham), murdered by the Evil Giant Brain named Gor. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Steve uses a window of opportunity—and an ax—to destroy Gor! (Chances are, the Republican Party won't be so lucky.)

husband who replaces his physical presence in the home with all the "finer things."

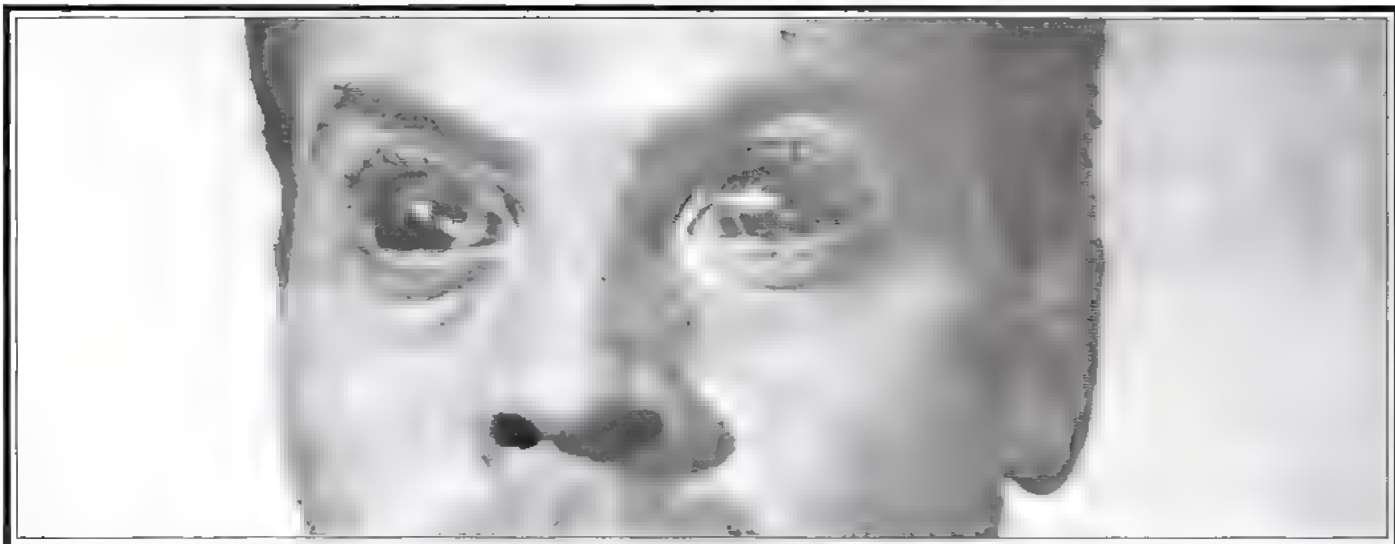
The scenes of Sally and Gor discussing their future are amazing, for each is playing the part they think the other wants to see—just like two people in love! Sally knows Steve is Gor, but Gor doesn't know Sally knows, and so he keeps up his Steve impression. Meanwhile, Sally does her impression of a Sally who doesn't know Steve is Gor. (Substitute alcoholism for Gor, and this is a classic dysfunctional relationship.) In this light, Agar's acting as Gor acting as Steve is a truly fascinating spectacle. At first, Agar's Steve/Gor is irritable and uncertain about how to behave, but gradually he finds, as Gor, a way to relate to people as Steve. The difference between Agar's performance and Meadows' reflects the right/left brain split. Where Agar is all jovial surface, Meadows is tortured, opaque depth. Where Agar is light, she is shadow. Like the fifties woman she portrays, Meadows carries the movie from the sidelines, letting Agar grab the glory.

Sally saves the day by writing the words "Gor's Achilles' heel" with an arrow pointing to the Fissure of Rolando on a diagram of the human brain. She leaves the diagram for Steve to find while Gor is taking his "body break." Steve finds the note with no trouble, and springs into action, killing Gor. Again, the economy of the narrative is admirable—no fumbling around, no tension as he looks at the table but doesn't see the note. It's wham, bam, roll the credits.

The fissure of Rolando, by the way, actually exists. (I looked it up.) It separates the frontal and parietal lobes, which store the personality and motor-coordination respectively. Symbolically, Steve severs the intellect from the body, allowing it to return to a state of pre-Reaganomics and pre-sexual idealism. By indicating this unique area as the weak point in Gor's otherwise impervious structure, *BRAIN* shows us that no brain, no "intelligence," is ever totally unified. A male/female right/left front/parietal split always sets even pure intellect off balance. It's in thinking that we're already whole and independent of those around us, that we end up hurting ourselves.

And yet, this sort of tragic wounding is essential for the advancement of life, for human maturity to occur. Still, even after all the bombs go off and brains are severed, there's no guarantee that the boy will be ready to put down his geiger counter or Nintendo game





and step into the breach of true romantic commitment. Sally and her canine familiar have provided Steve with liberation, but only time will tell if she'll get any sex out of the deal. In truth, she seems to have merely returned her situation to its static beginnings. Then again, that's all she can safely do without doing it all. As a true fifties woman, Sally must reign in her power if her man is ever to believe he's in charge; otherwise, nothing will ever happen. Sally's power, much like Joyce Meadow's performance, mustn't call attention to itself, it simply must *exist*. When Steve asks her how she knew about the fissure of Rolando, she tries to pass the credit to her familiar, Vol, but he's already left for Arous. Steve's final thought is one of incredulous surrender to the irrational unknowability of "women." Once again, he is back in the garden of blissful ignorance, but now

(hopefully) it's only a matter of time before he realizes the gate is unlocked.

Of course, one needn't read so deeply into the text of *THE BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS* to enjoy its low budget, fast-paced, laid back in-the-sun fun, but under its surface simplicity, *BRAIN* offers an intriguing commentary. Invasion from another world was a popular theme of the time, but this is the only movie in which the threat comes in the form of a single golf-shirt wearing, pipe-smoking, All American joe. When you see John Agar's apple cheeks glowing in a huge boyish grin while his shiny black eyes light up with power, you're seeing something completely unique in fifties sci fi—a portrait of America as the happy enemy of itself.



# CONRAD BROOKS Has a Brand-New Plan!

## JAN-GEL

### The Beast From the East

It's the most intriguing caveman epic of our time! Jan-Gel, thawed from his 50,000 year sleep, dedicates his new life in the present day to mutilating anyone he can find.

Dressed in a leopard skin and not much else, he wreaks havoc and still finds the time to fall in love with young Beth Simmons. However, special agents Conrad Brooks and Gary West are hot on his trail! Can they stop him before he finds his next victim?

Both enigmatic and shocking, *JAN-GEL* is a must-see for anyone who's ever enjoyed *PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE* or any of the other cult films of the 20th century. The portrayal by Edward D. Wood regular and *JAN-GEL* star/writer/producer/director Conrad Brooks is particularly absorbing—one of the best ever for this cult movie star!



Only  
\$25

Send check or money order to  
**SCARLET STREET VIDEO**  
PO Box 604, Glen Rock, NJ 07452

VHS only. Shipping in continental U.S.A. - \$4 first tape, \$2 each additional tape. Canada: \$8 first tape, \$4 each additional tape. Foreign: insured surface (for air mail, double rates) \$11 first tape, \$5 each additional tape. *Scarlet Street* ships via JPS and orders must have street address. ALLOW SIX WEEKS DELIVERY!

---

# THE MAN WITH THE BRAINS JOHN AGAR

interviewed by John Brunas and Terry Pace

Text by Terry Pace

*"My favorite leading lady I married—Loretta. She was in the bar when the Creature came in and grabbed Lori Nelson and took her out. Loretta was in the bar hollerin' and screamin'."*

—John Agar

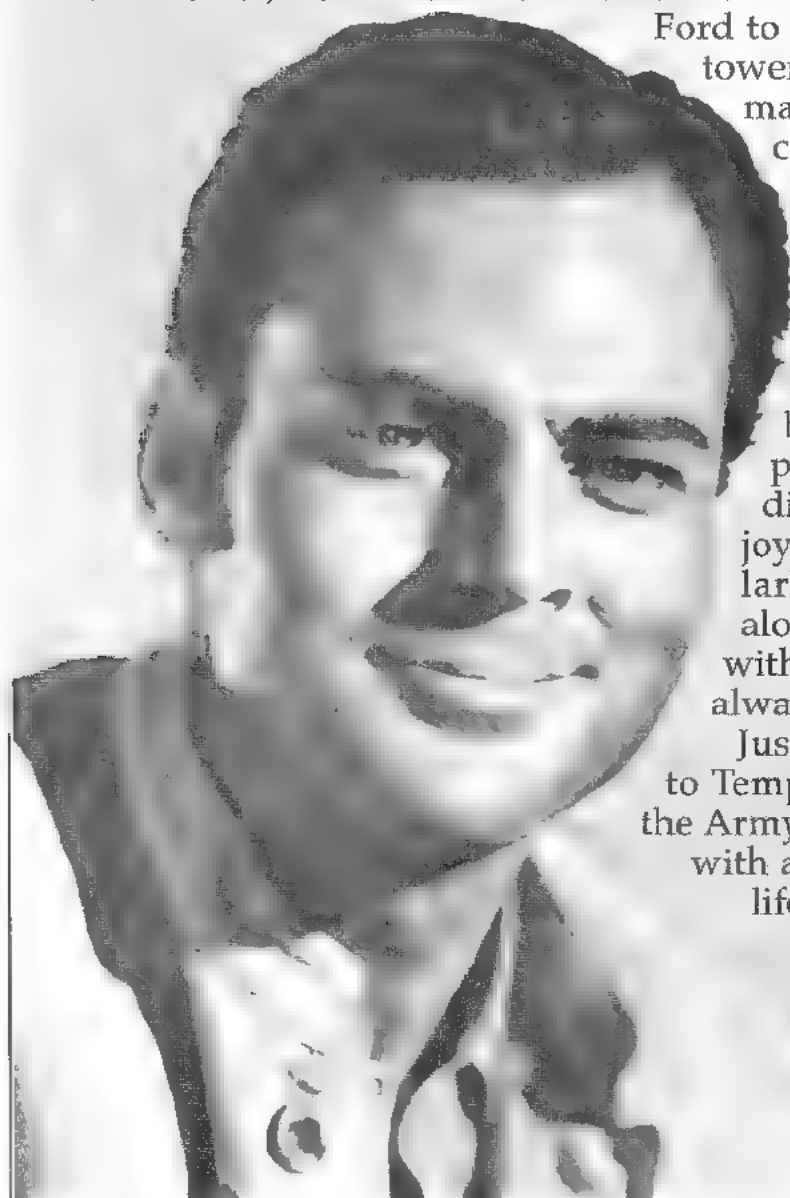
**J**ohn Agar never wanted to be an actor. "That was brought on entirely by accident," explains the 79-year-old Hollywood veteran, whose varied and colorful credits cover everything from A-list Westerns and war films to low budget sci-fi and horror, from classic collaborations with screen legends John Wayne and John

Ford to fantastic, hair-raising encounters with towering arachnids, subterranean mutants, malevolent brains from outer space, and creatures from the watery depths. "I never in a million years dreamed I'd wind up making pictures."

"I guess I've done a little bit of everything," laughs Agar, who first entered the show biz spotlight as the first husband of "America's Sweetheart," beloved thirties child star Shirley Temple. "I enjoyed making every picture I did, even the worst ones. They're all enjoyable for one reason or another, particularly some of the people you work with along the way—whether they're on screen with you or behind the camera. Something always makes the experience worthwhile."

Just after World War II, Agar was married to Temple—and still serving as a sergeant in the Army Air Corps—when a chance encounter with a Hollywood heavyweight changed his life forever. The year was 1945, and Agar was a 24-year-old husband pondering an uncertain future.

"I was home on furlough," Agar recalled, "and that's when I ran into David O. Selznick. He





had done *GONE WITH THE WIND* and a lot of other big Hollywood pictures—he was the top independent producer in town. We were both at the same party, and we got to talking. I told him I was about to be discharged from the service. He said, 'What are you doing after you get out?' When I told him I didn't know, he said, 'Ever considered being an actor?' I just told him, 'No, I'm a meat packer's son from Chicago.' He laughed and said, 'Well, that's not too far off from being an actor. I'd like to arrange for you to do a screen test.'

As soon as he completed his military duty, Agar accepted Selznick's offer one decisive day in 1946. "I went to the studio and did a screen test," Agar remembered. "It was a scene from *THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER*, the picture Loretta Young did. I did the scene, and I was scared to death. I don't know what Selznick saw in that test. I saw it later and thought it was just terrible! I couldn't bear to look at it! But Selznick must have seen something, because he put me under contract and paid me \$150 a week. I was making \$83 a month in the service, so that was a big step up. I started taking acting lessons and going to auditions."

Though he would remain under contract to Selznick through 1951 (when the independent mogul shut down his production company), Agar never made a movie under the Selznick banner. Instead, it took yet another unexpected encounter with yet another titanic Hollywood talent to finally launch Agar's screen career.

"My mother and sister were coming home from a cruise to Hawaii, and I went down to meet them," Agar explained. "Lo and behold, John Ford, his wife Mary, and their daughter Barbara were on that same boat. They'd all gotten to know each other. It wasn't long after that that Mr. Selznick called me in and told me, 'Go and see Mr. Ford and Merian C. Cooper. They're doing a new picture, a Western called *WAR PARTY*, and they want to see you.'"

Agar will never forget his dramatic introduction to producer Cooper (1933's *KING KONG*) and Oscar-winning director Ford. "As soon as I went in to see Mr. Ford, he had me standing at attention and doing left face, right face, about face. Then he asked, 'Were you in the service?' I said, 'Yes, sir—Army Air Corps.' Ford said, 'Oh, you mean, Off We Go Into the Wild Blue Yonder—crash?' So I asked him, 'Were you in the service?' And he said, 'I was a commander in the Navy.' So I shot back, 'Oh, you mean, Anchors Aweigh—sink?' He must have thought I was okay, because I got the part."

The *WAR PARTY* Western—eventually retitled *FORT APACHE*—became the first installment in Ford's critically acclaimed Cavalry Trilogy. The story centered on a military martinet (Henry Fonda, in one of his darkest and most complex roles) who takes command of a remote fort and instantly clashes with both the surrounding Indians and his seasoned second-in-command (Ford favorite Wayne). Agar appeared in the likable role of a young cavalry officer who serves as the romantic interest for Fonda's daughter (played by Agar's wife Shirley, who had shifted into young-

adult roles the previous year opposite Cary Grant and Myrna Loy in the screwball comedy *THE BACHELOR AND THE BOBBY SOXER*).

"Ford was a tough guy, and he got on my case a couple of times," Agar remarked. "I always thought he was kidding. You see, I'm a kidder—so I always thought he was kidding me. I'd talk to Wayne and Fonda and Victor McLaglen and Ward Bond and George O'Brien. They told me, 'We've known him for 30 years, and we never know when he's kidding and when he's not.' I was petrified there for a while! That was my first picture, and I had no idea what the heck I was doing! I was working with all these old-timers that I loved and admired—the Ford stock company,

they were called—and I couldn't believe how gracious they were. They were like family, and I wouldn't have made it without them. Ford, I always thought he was just a big pussycat. He just put on that tough demeanor. He did get after me one time, though, but I just laughed it off."

Ford could be rather high handed with his actors, though, as character player Arthur Shields learned when he turned down a role and the director never hired him again.

"That could be," Agar nodded. "I never got involved in that sort of thing because I was under contract to David Selznick and he handled everything. I was always of the opinion that if somebody put you under contract, they're going to do the best job not only for you but for themselves. I always put complete trust in the people that represented me. I did the same thing at Universal, too, when I was under contract there. I worked with Arthur Shields on *DAUGHTER OF DR. JEKYLL*, and I think he had the same feelings as I did about this business. This was work, this was your job. You go out and do your job. Once he did a movie over in India, and he didn't get paid and didn't have a ticket home! He had to wire all the way back here for money, so he could get back! I did a movie

—that Ricou Browning directed called *MR. NO LEGS*, which never came out in this country, and got paid, paid my agent his commission, and two weeks later the check bounced and I never did get paid!"

Released in 1948, *FORT APACHE* was an instant sensation with audiences and critics alike. The Agars were reunited as romantic costars for a 1949 period piece, *ADVENTURE IN BALTIMORE*. That same year, the young leading man shared the screen with Robert Ryan and Laraine Day in Robert Stevenson's film-noir melodrama, *I MARRIED A COMMUNIST* (aka *WOMAN ON PIER 13*). The stunning success of *FORT APACHE* prompted Ford to cast Agar in a similar role—another idealistic young cavalry officer—in the director's second cavalry drama, the rousing 1949 Technicolor triumph *SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON*.

"As far as I'm concerned, Ford was the ultimate movie director," Agar maintains. "When he made a picture, he created it in his mind. He made *SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON* in 28 days—the whole thing, from start to finish. When he was on the set, he only shot what he needed. He never went to rushes, and he didn't allow actors to, either.



Looking like America's Sweethearts—which they were—John Agar poses with first wife Shirley Temple for this photo from John Ford's classic *FORT APACHE* (1948)

***"There was one scene where John Bromfield was pulled into the tank by the Creature. I was at the other end and Jack Arnold told me to dive in, but just below the surface was a whole bunch of rocks. When Jack yelled action, I didn't even look, I just went! While I was in the air, I saw this coral rock, and I flattened out my dive—but it still hit me across the chest. If I'd hit and bled, there might have been some excitement there..."***

He always said, 'Why should I watch the rushes? I already know what it looks like.' He shot everything the way he wanted it, and that was the way the editor had to cut it—Ford's way. The editor didn't have any other choice."

Shot in Ford's favored locale of Monument Valley, Utah, *SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON* cast Wayne as an aging cavalry officer who resists retirement on the eve of an imminent Indian revolt. Ford once again recruited his stock company to fill the movie's colorful supporting roles, with rising Western stars Harry Carey Jr. and Ben Johnson joining Agar as a feisty young trio of officers. All were involved in the now-fabled filming of a magnificent lightning storm—an outdoor scene that sent premonitions of doom through the terrified company.

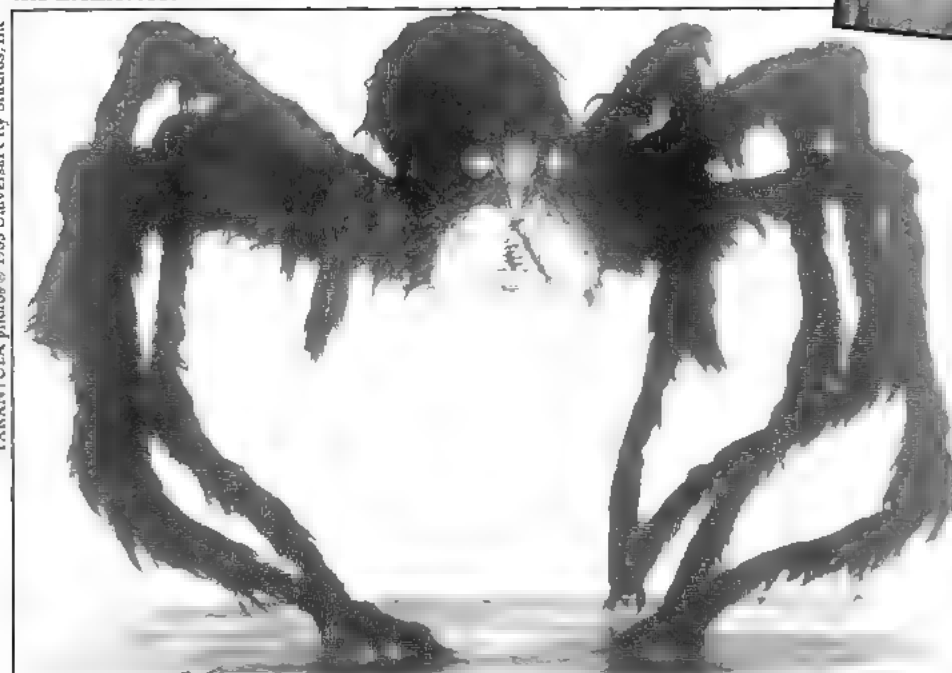
"That's a true story," Agar noted. "We were shooting on location, and this electrical storm came up. Lightning was flashing all around us, and we were nervous. There was plenty of metal on those bridles and saddles, and it was getting a little dangerous out there. So Winton Hoch, Ford's cinematographer, tells us it's a wrap. Lightning's striking all over the place, but Ford yells out, 'No! We keep shooting!' We went on shooting right through that entire electrical storm—and the cameraman won an Oscar! I still think that scene in the storm must have had a lot to do with that."

Throughout the two films with Ford, Wayne had become Agar's most trusted friend and adviser. The actors would reunite for a third time before the end of 1949, co-starring in Allan Dwan's gritty, hard edged World War II drama *SANDS OF IWO JIMA*. Wayne earned his first Academy Award nomination as a tough-as-nails Marine sergeant who clashes with a principled young Marine played by Agar.

"With an actor like John Wayne, there was an honesty and integrity in everything he did," Agar insists. "He earned that Oscar nomination for *SANDS OF IWO JIMA*, and I thought he should have been nominated for *SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON*, too. What you saw on screen was what he was. Those were two of his best pictures, and I'm glad I was there to see it. He was like a big brother to me, even though he was 14 years my senior. He was just a super guy as far as I was concerned."

Like his two classic John Ford Westerns, *SANDS OF IWO JIMA* was such a box-office smash that Agar was instantly cast in another big-budget war picture, 1950's World War II drama *BREAKTHROUGH*. That same year, Agar suffered a personal setback—and possible professional ramifications—

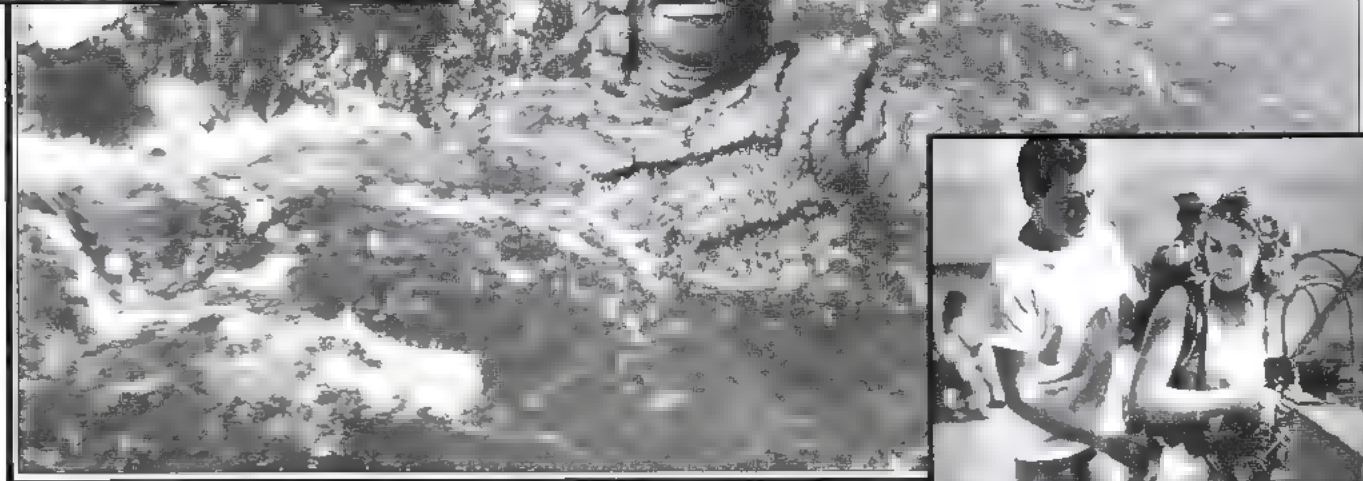
**RIGHT:** Matt Hastings and Stephanie Clayton (John Agar and Mara Corday) are shocked to find Professor Deemer (Leo G. Carroll) the victim of his own experiments in *TARANTULA* (1955). **BELOW:** The title critter in all his eight-legged gory glory! **PAGE 69:** The Gill Man seeks Revenge in the aptly named *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* (1955). **PAGE 69 LEFT INSERT:** Cleo Ferguson, Helen Dobson, and Joe Hayes (John Agar, Lori Nelson, and John Bromfield) discuss the best way to handle a nasty Creature. **PAGE 69 RIGHT INSERT:** Will romance go swimmingly for Cleo and Helen or will it be just a case of "tanks for the memories?"



so called "storybook marriage" to Shirley Temple ended in divorce.

"We were both pretty young, and it just didn't work out," Agar explained. "When we separated, I made a deal with her that we wouldn't say anything against each other. I've stuck to my word on that, and I always will. You know, you live and you learn, and I look back on that as a learning experience. I don't have any ill feelings, and I've always wished her the best."

Right after the divorce, Agar teamed with top flight action director Raoul Walsh as he costarred with Kirk Douglas and Virginia Mayo in the sprawling 1951 Western *ALONG THE GREAT DIVIDE* (the only movie, by the way, that showcases Agar's silky-smooth singing voice). Also that year, Agar found renewed



domestic stability when he wed his second wife, Loretta, a dancer he had met at the Riviera Country Club (Loretta had appeared as a dancer in Orson Welles' *CITIZEN KANE* in 1941 and would later play a small role as a screaming woman in 1955's *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*.) The year 1951 also marked the end of Agar's Selznick contract and the actor's first appearance in a fantasy film—Lew Landers' lightweight, low-budget Lucille Ball vehicle *THE MAGIC CARPET*.

"Sam Katzman produced that one," Agar recalled. "Lucy was delightful, but the flying carpet was a little tricky. It was up on this platform, and they had wires attached to it to make the thing rise up and take off. I had to lean my body weight forward to keep the carpet contraption moving. Well, one time we were working with it, and they had me lean forward a little too far. The carpet tipped over, and I was left hanging onto the wires for dear life—suspended 30 feet in the air! I got a good scare out of that one."

The Katzman quickie marked the beginning of Agar's quick descent into B films and programmers. His next assignments included Joe Kane's rip-roaring Republic Western *WOMAN OF THE NORTH COUNTRY* (1952), costarring Rod Cameron and Ruth Hussey; the melodramas *MAN OF CONFLICT* (1953) with Edward Arnold, *BAIT* (1954) with Hugo Haas (who also directed), and *SHIELD FOR MURDER* (1954) with Edmond O'Brien (who also directed), and a good-natured sci-fi comedy called *THE ROCKET MAN* (1954) with Charles Coburn and Beverly Garland. Also in 1954, Agar traveled southward to Haiti to costar with Rosemarie Bowie in an effective, offbeat voodoo thriller called *THE GOLDEN MISTRESS*.

"That was the first movie ever done with scuba gear, and I did all the underwater stuff," Agar noted. "We ended up in the water with everything from a shark or two to a bunch of alligators! I even had to take a pretty dangerous 60 foot dive in that one. Then, wouldn't you know it, they didn't even use that shot in the film! When *GOLDEN MISTRESS* came out, something unexpected happened. Universal saw that picture and signed me to a contract. The first

picture I did for them was *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*—so I went right back into the water!"

Directed by genre favorite Jack Arnold, the 3D-lensed *REVENGE* was a direct sequel to Universal International's *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* smash. The science fictional story, in which a prehistoric Gill Man terrorizes nosy human explorers in the Amazon, had reestablished the studio as Hollywood's foremost maker of monster movies.

"We shot the underwater scenes at Marineland, down in Florida," explained Agar, who played a marine biologist who studies the captured Creature at a Florida aquarium. Tom Hennessy replaced original Creature player Ben Chapman in the *REVENGE* land scenes, while champion diver Ricou Browning continued to play the menacing man fish in the series' harrowing underwater sequences.

"Ricou was an amazing guy—I don't think many people could have pulled off what he did in those underwater scenes," Agar remarked. "We had an underwater photographer and some of the Marineland people there in the water with us. We never worried too much about the sharks because they were pretty well fed. Ricou was more worried about the sea turtles. He couldn't see them in that suit, because it blocked out his peripheral vision. Those turtles would come along beside him in the water and nip at him! They gave him quite a fit."

Agar never heard the voice of the turtle, but the sharks were another story. "Oh, I've had sharks swimming around me a lot of times. First of all, when they capture sharks, they take 'em and walk 'em. They gotta force the water through the lungs to get 'em revived again, and I did it. There's a scene in the picture where I'm walking the shark, and those sharks are very well fed. They don't pay any attention to you, really. And there's no blood in the water, so they don't smell anything to get them excited."

Still, filming *REVENGE* wasn't without mishaps. "There was one scene where John Bromfield was pulled into the tank by the Creature. I was at the other end of the tank and Jack Arnold told me to dive in, but just below the



surface was a whole bunch of rocks. They were about two feet below the surface of the water. When Jack yelled action, I didn't even look. I just went! While I was in the air, I saw this coral rock, and I flattened out my dive—but it still hit me across the chest. If I'd hit and bled, there might have been some excitement there, but it didn't happen.

After the box-office success of *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*, Universal-International wasted no time casting Agar in the top-billed role of Matt Hastings, an Arizona doctor who confronts a very big *TARANTULA* in one of the best giant-monster movies of the fifties. Veteran character actor Leo G. Carroll played a misguided scientist who injects an experimental nutrient into a common tarantula with terrifying results.

Agar recalled the 1955 film's towering special effects: "When Mara Corday and I were out in the desert of course there wasn't any tarantula out there, climbing over those hills or mountains. We just had to react to that and use our imagination. That was all done in the studios. You used your imagination and reacted to what you wanted the audience to believe you were seeing. It's like kids: they can conjure up all kinds of things. Well, we're just bigger kids!"

The "special effect" back at the studio, however, wasn't entirely a fake. "They shot it with a real tarantula, and then they layered it to make it look 100 feet tall. They're really pretty harmless, except when they're hungry or scared. Then they'll nip on you. When we were making it, I had no idea how it would turn out. But it really caught on. I think *TARANTULA* cost a total of \$750,000 to make. It turned out to be fifth-biggest money-grosser of the entire industry for that year!"

Agar credits Jack Arnold with being one of Hollywood's most versatile and underappreciated directors. Both *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* and *TARANTULA* were among the biggest box-office hits of 1955.

"The way Ford and Arnold worked was very similar," Agar observed. "They both knew what they wanted, and they were both prepared when they got to the set. If you did what they wanted, they wouldn't say very much. If they wanted you to do something a different way, they might walk over and say, 'Why don't you do this?' Jack was a real pro. He did so many science-fiction films that I don't think he ever really got the credit he deserved. I always thought Universal should have given him opportunities to do other things. He proved with *THE MOUSE THAT ROARED* that he could do a big picture and deliver a hit, but the studios very seldom gave him that kind of chance. He was a great guy, and I always had nothing but respect for him."

Still under contract to Universal, Agar was loaned out for a rather routine reunion with director Haas, playing a death-row inmate in the tawdry 1955 melodrama *HOLD BACK TOMORROW*. Back at Universal, Agar played a courageous frontier sheriff who faces a lynch mob, a cold-blooded killer (Richard Boone), and a blonde bombshell played by Mamie Van Doren in the tense, mature Western *A STAR IN THE DUST*. By the time he made that feature, all three of Agar's Universal vehicles had featured small roles by a tall, lanky, soft-spoken young contract player named Clint Eastwood.

"Clint was great to work with," Agar recalled. "He was just starting out, and he really wanted to make a good impression. He played the lab assistant in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*. He was pretty funny in the scene where the mouse turned up in his pocket. I remember that Jack Arnold got on him one day, and Clint looked pretty upset. I kept thinking about how nervous I felt the first time I worked with Ford and he got on my case. So I went over to Clint and said, 'Don't let it get to you. Just get over it, move on, and do your best.' He went on and did a great job, and he and Jack got along fine from then on. Clint also played the jet pilot who dropped the napalm on the creature in *TARANTULA*. He also had a little role in *STAR IN THE DUST*. I think he was one of the townsmen."

"You know, a few years later Sergio Leone wanted to get Eric Fleming, who was on *RAWHIDE* with Clint Eastwood, to go over to Italy and do *A FISTFUL OF DOLLARS*. Eric Fleming said, 'I can't. I've already got a job. I'm going down to South America and do a movie. Why don't you get Clint?' So Sergio Leone got Clint and Eric Fleming, and he went down to South America to do this picture, and he drowned."

After *STAR IN THE DUST*, Agar starred in his third sci-fi feature in two years: *THE MOLE PEOPLE*. Agar, Cynthia Patrick, Hugh Beaumont, and Alan Napier in a far-fetched tale of archaeologists in the Middle East who stumble onto the Sumerians—a sinister albino society who have transformed a race of underground mutants into a slave labor force. *THE MOLE PEOPLE* was conceived by Universal producer William Alland, who had also produced *TARANTULA*. As an actor, Alland had appeared on Orson Welles' famed 1938 "Panic Broadcast" as the H.C. Wells Martian invasion classic, *THE WAR OF THE WORLDS*.

"Bill Alland played a big role in the success of those science-fiction pictures at Universal—there's no doubt about that," Agar remarked. "He came up with the ideas and put the projects together. He was the producer, and he was a big moving force behind the scenes. Virgil Vogel was the director on *MOLE PEOPLE*, and he did the best he could. I just don't think the script was as good as the two pictures I had done with Jack Arnold. When I first read the *MOLE PEOPLE* script, there was a lot of silly dialogue. I went to Bill Alland and said, 'This won't work—people just don't talk like this.' He got a little offended and told me, 'I paid a writer good money to write that dialogue.' So I said, 'Well, you got cheated! I got that off my chest, and then I went right back to work. It wasn't long after that that I left Universal!'"

Agar's brief tenure at Universal proved to be a double-edged sword. Although he was working in high-profile films that were solid box-office hits, the actor felt typecast as a one-dimensional sci-fi hero. "After *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* turned out to be a big money-maker, that was the way they looked at me. Any time a science-fiction picture would come up at Universal, Bill Alland would say he wanted me in it. The studio at the time was grooming a lot of young actors—Rock Hudson, Tony Curtis, Jeff Chandler, and George Nader. I was part of that same group, but the studio only seemed to want to put me in science fiction. The other guys were doing comedies, Westerns, love stories,

war pictures. I didn't particularly mind doing the science-fiction pictures, but I wanted an opportunity to do some of those other things, too."

It was during those frustrating years that Agar lost the one role he truly wanted to play. As soon as he heard that Ford had started casting a major Western project called *THE SEARCHERS*, Agar set his sights on the choice role of half-breed Martin Pawley, the second lead behind John Wayne's relentless, brooding avenger, Ethan Edwards. Today the dark, complex, controversial Western is considered Ford's undisputed masterpiece.

"That was one part I wanted," Agar confessed. "I hadn't worked for Ford in a few years, and I wanted to work with Wayne again. I had a feeling it was going to be one of Ford's best, and I wanted to be a part of it. I thought it might be just the thing I needed. I went in to talk to Ford, and he was very nice, but he had already made up his mind that Jeffrey Hunter was going to do the picture. I don't think the divorce from Shirley had anything to do with it, but it might have. By that time, I had done several of those B pictures, the science-fiction pictures, and that image may have worked against me. Who knows? It was a disappointment, but that's the way it goes in this business. I wasn't bitter about it."

Intentional or not, a humiliating incident on the set of *THE MOLE PEOPLE* helped convince Agar to abandon his Universal contract and pursue more diverse opportunities. "We were working on the picture, and there were all these guys around us with the Mole Men masks on. All of a sudden I heard this voice say, 'Agar, what did you get yourself into this time?' I turned around, and it was Rock Hudson. I don't know if he meant anything by it, but just the way he said it bothered me. It sounded like he had kind of a derogatory tone in his voice. So I went to Jim Pratt, who was vice president of Universal, and I told him I wanted to do other things. He told me flat out he couldn't. He told me promises—so I decided it was time to move on."

Agar soon went to work as a freelance actor, starring in such forgettable, low-budget fare as the Westerns *RIDE A VIOLENT MILE* and *FLESH AND THE SPUR* (both 1957) and *FRONTIER GUN* (1958), and the war film *JET ATTACK* (1958). Returning briefly to Universal, he played a supporting role opposite Audie Murphy and Burgess Meredith in the World War II-era drama *JOE BUTTERFLY* (1957). Still, there was no escaping his indelible image as a stalwart hero of sci-fi thrillers.

"Maybe I made a big mistake leaving Universal. I don't know," Agar mused. "The whole reason I left was because I felt limited. So I went out on my own and started to freelance. I certainly made more money that way, but do you know what was the first picture I did after I left Universal? *DAUGHTER OF DR. JEKYLL*. So I went right back into the same kind of thing I was making at Universal! The reason I went ahead and did that was simple. I had to make a living, and that's what was being offered to me at the time. I didn't have much of a choice."

Although not one of his better efforts, 1957's *DAUGHTER OF DR. JEKYLL* at least teamed all-American leading man Agar with respected, Austrian-born genre director Edgar G. Ulmer. The convoluted plot of Agar's first outright

horror film centered on the half-normal, half-monstrous daughter (Glona Talbot) of Robert Louis Stevenson's demented doctor. The ludicrous script blended elements of Stevenson's duality-of-man concept with liberal doses of vampirism and lycanthropy.

"Ulmer was a nice man, and he had a reputation for getting the job done quickly and still giving his pictures a certain amount of style," Agar observed. "I think the odds were stacked against him on that one! I guess it was all right, but I can't say that I was real happy making it. I just took the money and ran."

The year after *DAUGHTER OF DR. JEKYLL*, Agar found himself diminished to subhuman size in *ATTACK OF THE PUPPET PEOPLE*, a low-budget thriller from Hollywood schlock artist Bert I. Gordon. "I don't think Bert liked me very much—we just never seemed to hit it off. Again, at that time I wasn't thrilled about doing that kind of picture."

Loretta and I used to bowl in a league at that time, and this one particular day Bert assured me that I'd get off on time to make my league, because they counted on me being there. Then filming dragged on and on and on and he said, 'You're working for me!' It went past the time and he said, 'You're working for me and, dog-gone it, you're being paid for this.' We got into a big argument about it, but it was nothing, really. I did what he told me and finished the job, but I don't believe Bert thought I was giving it all I had."

The film's oversized props proved to be a challenge, as did Gordon's attitude toward his star. "I had to climb up, getting up on a table on a rope going hand over hand. I heard Bert make the statement, 'Agar can't do that.' Don't ever say I can't do something, 'cause I'm gonna kill myself to do it! And I did! It was interesting working with the giant props they built to make the actors look smaller—but aside from that, I proved to be a challenge, as did Gordon's attitude toward his star."

Also in 1958, Agar played both a heroic, sympathetic role and a frightening, manicured villain in a movie that simultaneously became one of his more notorious films as well as one of his most beloved—*THE BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS*. The ultra-weird camp classic was directed by Nathan Juran, who chose to be credited as Nathan Hertz.

"He didn't want his real name on that picture," Agar laughed. "That ought to tell you something about *THE BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS*! When I signed up to do that picture, they wanted me to take a percentage. I told them, 'No, just give me a salary. And all you guys who take a percentage, I hope you make a million dollars each.' Once again, I did it simply for the money. I didn't think the *BRAIN* would escape, much less be released! When they first showed me the brain, I couldn't believe it! It was nothing but a big balloon with a face painted on it! I said, 'Jeepers, that's going to look kind of weird, isn't it? Nobody's going to believe that!'"

In terms of acting, the *AROUS* role offered Agar a welcome change of pace—as well as some dangerous makeup involving his transformation into a brain-possessed madman. The makeup artist on the film was none other than aging maestro Jack Pierce, who had long since departed the Universal studios where he had helped create some of the screen's classic monsters of the thirties and forties.



Did you ever see a dream stalking? How about a nightmare? John Agar takes a snooze during a visit from one of *THE MOLE PEOPLE* (1956).



Blacky Lagoon cleverly tries to pass himself off as a tree in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*, but John Agar and Lori Nelson just ain't buyin' it...

surface was a whole bunch of rocks. They were about two feet below the surface of the water. When Jack yelled action, I didn't even look, I just went! While I was in the air, I saw this coral rock, and I flattened out my dive—but it still hit me across the chest. If I'd had a hat and bled, there might have been some excitement there, but it didn't happen.

After the box-office success of *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*, Universal-International wasted no time casting Agar in the top-billed role of Matt Hastings, an Arizona doctor who confronts a very big *TARANTULA* in one of the best giant-monster movies of the fifties. Veteran character actor Leo G. Carroll played a misguided scientist who injects an experimental nutrient into a common tarantula—with terrifying results.

Agar recalled the 1955 film's towering special effects: "When Mara Corday and I were out in the desert, of course there wasn't any tarantula out there, climbing over those hills or mountains. We just had to react to that and use our imagination. That was all done in the studios. You used your imagination and reacted to what you wanted the audience to believe you were seeing. It's like kids—they can conjure up all kinds of things. Well, we're just bigger kids!"

The "special effect" back at the studio, however, wasn't entirely a fake. "They shot it with a real tarantula, and then they re-layered it to make it look 100-feet tall. They're really pretty harmless, except when they're hungry or scared. Then they'll nip on you. When we were making it, I had no idea how it would turn out. But it really caught on. I think *TARANTULA* cost a total of \$750,000 to make. It turned out to be fifth-biggest money-grosser of the entire industry for that year!"

Agar credits Jack Arnold with being one of Hollywood's most versatile and underappreciated directors. Both *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* and *TARANTULA* were among the biggest box-office hits of 1955.

"The way Ford and Arnold worked was very similar," Agar observed. "They both knew what they wanted, and they were both prepared when they got to the set. If you did what they wanted, they wouldn't say very much. If they wanted you to do something a different way, they might walk over and say, 'Why don't you do this?' Jack was a real pro. He did so many science-fiction films that I don't think he ever really got the credit he deserved. I always thought Universal should have given him opportunities to do other things. He proved with *THE MOUSE THAT ROARED* that he could do a big picture and deliver a hit, but the studios very seldom gave him that kind of chance. He was a great guy, and I always had nothing but respect for him."

Still under contract to Universal, Agar was loaned out for a rather routine reunion with director Haas, playing a death row inmate in the tawdry 1955 melodrama *HOLD BACK TOMORROW*. Back at Universal, Agar played a courageous frontier sheriff who faces a lynch mob, a cold-blooded killer (Richard Boone), and a blonde bombshell played by Mamie Van Doren in the tense, mature Western *A STAR IN THE DUST*. By the time he made that feature, all three of Agar's Universal vehicles had featured small roles by a tall, lanky, soft-spoken young contract player named Clint Eastwood.

"Clint was great to work with," Agar recalled. "He was just starting out, and he really wanted to make a good impression. He played the lab assistant in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*. He was pretty funny in the scene where the mouse turned up in his pocket. I remember that Jack Arnold got on him one day, and Clint looked pretty upset. I kept thinking about how nervous I felt the first time I worked with Ford and he got on my case. So I went over to Clint and said, 'Don't let it get to you. Just get over it, move on, and do your best.' He went on and did a great job, and he and Jack got along fine from then on. Clint also played the jet pilot who dropped the napalm on the creature in *TARANTULA*. He also had a little role in *STAR IN THE DUST*. I think he was one of the townsmen."

"You know, a few years later Sergio Leone wanted to get Eric Fleming, who was on *RAWHIDE* with Clint Eastwood, to go over to Italy and do *A FISTFUL OF DOLLARS*."

Eric Fleming said, "I can't. I've already got a job. I'm going down to South America and do a movie. Why don't you get Clint?" So Sergio Leone got Clint and Eric Fleming, he went down to South America to do this picture, and he drowned!"

After *STAR IN THE DUST*, Agar starred in his third sci-fi feature in two years. *THE MOLE PEOPLE* cast Agar, Cynthia Patrick, Hugh Beaumont, and Alan Napier in a far-fetched tale of archaeologists in the Middle East who stumble onto the Sumerians—a sinister albino society who have transformed a race of underground mutants into a slave labor force. *THE MOLE PEOPLE* was conceived by Universal producer William Alland, who had also produced *TARANTULA*. As an actor, Alland had appeared on Orson Welles' famed 1938 "Panic Broadcast" of the H.G. Wells Martian-invasion classic, *THE WAR OF THE WORLDS*.

"Bill Alland played a big role in the success of those science-fiction pictures at Universal—there's no doubt about that," Agar remarked.

"He came up with the ideas and put the projects together. He was the producer, and he was a big moving force behind the scenes. Virgil Vogel was the director on *MOLE PEOPLE*, and he did the best he could. I just don't think the script was as good as the two pictures I had done with Jack Arnold. When I first read the *MOLE PEOPLE* script, there was a lot of silly dialogue. I went to Bill Alland and said, 'This won't work—people just don't talk like this.' He got a little offended and told me, 'I paid a writer good money to write that dialogue.' So I said, 'Well, you got cheated!' I got that off my chest, and then I went right back to work. It wasn't long after that that I left Universal."

Agar's brief tenure at Universal proved to be a double-edged sword. Although he was working in high profile films that were solid box-office hits, the actor felt typecast as a one-dimensional sci-fi hero. "After *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* turned out to be a big moneymaker, that was the way they looked at me. Any time a science-fiction picture would come up at Universal, Bill Alland would say he wanted me in it. The studio at the time was grooming a lot of young actors—Rock Hudson, Tony Curtis, Jeff Chandler, and George Nader. I was part of that same group, but the studio only seemed to want to put me in science fiction. The other guys were doing comedies, Westerns, love stories,



Did you ever see a dream stalking? How about a nightmare? John Agar takes a snooze during a visit from one of *THE MOLE PEOPLE* (1956)

war pictures I didn't particularly mind doing the science-fiction pictures, but I wanted an opportunity to do some of those other things, too."

It was during those frustrating years that Agar lost the one role he truly wanted to play. As soon as he heard that Ford had started casting a major Western project called *THE SEARCHERS*, Agar set his sights on the choice role of half-breed Martin Pawley, the second lead behind John Wayne's relentless, brooding avenger Ethan Edwards. Today the dark, complex, controversial Western is considered Ford's undisputed masterpiece.

"That was one part I wanted," Agar confessed. "I hadn't worked for Ford in a few years, and I wanted to work with Wayne again. I had a feeling it was going to be one of Ford's best, and I wanted to be a part of it. I thought it might be just the thing I needed. I went in to talk to Ford, and he was very nice, but he had already made up his mind that Jeffrey Hunter was going to do the picture. I don't think the divorce from Shirley had anything to do with it, but it might have. By that time, I had done several of those B pictures, the science-fiction pictures, and that image may have worked against me. Who knows? It was a disappointment, but that's the way it goes in this business. I wasn't bitter about it."

Intentional or not, a humiliating incident on the set of *THE MOLE PEOPLE* helped convince Agar to abandon his Universal contract and pursue more diverse opportunities. "We were working on the picture, and there were all these guys around us with the Mole Men masks on. All of a sudden I heard this voice say, 'Agar, what did you get yourself into this time?' I turned around, and it was Rock Hudson. I don't know if he meant anything by it, but just the way he said it bothered me. It sounded like he had kind of a derogatory tone in his voice. So I went to Jim Pratt, who was vice president of Universal, and I told him I wanted to do other things. He told me flat out he couldn't make any promises—so I decided it was time to move on."

Agar soon went to work as a freelance actor, starring in such forgettable, low-budget fare as the Westerns *RIDE A VIOLENT MILE* and *FLESH AND THE SPUR* (both 1957) and *FRONTIER GUN* (1958), and the war film *JET ATTACK* (1958). Returning briefly to Universal, he played a supporting role opposite Audie Murphy and Burgess Meredith in the World War II-era drama *JOE BUTTERFLY* (1957). Still, there was no escaping his indelible image as a stalwart hero of sci-fi thrillers.

"Maybe I made a big mistake leaving Universal—I don't know," Agar mused. "The whole reason I left was because I felt limited. So I went out on my own and started to freelance. I certainly made more money that way, but do you know what was the first picture I did after I left Universal? *DAUGHTER OF DR. JEKYLL*! So I went right back into the same kind of thing I was making at Universal! The reason I went ahead and did that was simple. I had to make a living, and that's what was being offered to me at the time. I didn't have much of a choice."

Although not one of his better efforts, 1957's *DAUGHTER OF DR. JEKYLL* at least teamed all-American leading man Agar with respected, Austrian-born genre director Edgar G. Ulmer. The convoluted plot of Agar's first outright

horror film centered on the half-normal, half-monstrous daughter (Gloria Talbott) of Robert Louis Stevenson's demented doctor. The ludicrous script blended elements of Stevenson's duality-of-man concept with liberal doses of vampirism and lycanthropy.

"Ulmer was a nice man, and he had a reputation for getting the job done quickly and still giving his pictures a certain amount of style," Agar observed. "I think the odds were stacked against him on that one! I guess it was all right, but I can't say that I was really happy making it. I just took the money and ran."

The year after *DAUGHTER OF DR. JEKYLL*, Agar found himself diminished to subhuman size in *ATTACK OF THE PUPPET PEOPLE*, a low budget thriller from Hollywood schlock artist Bert I. Gordon. "I don't think Bert liked me very much—we just never seemed to hit it off. Again, at that time I wasn't thrilled about doing that kind of picture.



Blacky Lagoon cleverly tries to pass himself off as a tree in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*, but John Agar and Lori Nelson just ain't buyin' it...

Loretta and I used to bowl in a league at that time, and this one particular day Bert assured me that I'd get off on time to make my league, because they counted on me being there. Then filming dragged on and on and on and he said, 'You're working for me!' It went past the time and he said, 'You're working for me and, dog-gone it, you're being paid for this.' We got into a big argument about it, but it was nothing, really. I did what he told me and finished the job, but I don't believe Bert thought I was giving it all I had."

The film's oversized props proved to be a challenge, as did Gordon's attitude toward his star. "I had to climb up, getting up on a table on a rope going hand over hand. I heard Bert make the statement, 'Agar can't do that.' Don't ever say I can't do something, 'cause I'm gonna kill myself to do it! And I did! It was interesting working with the giant props they built to make the actors look smaller—but aside from that, I don't think the picture worked."

Also in 1958, Agar played both a heroic, sympathetic role and a frightening, maniacal villain in a movie that simultaneously became one of his more notorious films as well as one of his most beloved—*THE BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS*. The ultra weird camp classic was directed by Nathan Juran, who chose to be credited as Nathan Hertz.

"He didn't want his real name on that picture," Agar laughed. "That ought to tell you something about *THE BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS*! When I signed up to do that picture, they wanted me to take a percentage. I told them, 'No, just give me a salary. And all you guys who take a percentage, I hope you make a million dollars each.' Once again, I did it simply for the money. I didn't think the *BRAIN* would escape, much less be released! When they first showed me the brain, I couldn't believe it! It was nothing but a big balloon with a face painted on it! I said, 'Jeepers, that's going to look kind of weird, isn't it? Nobody's going to believe that!'"

In terms of acting, the *AROUS* role offered Agar a welcome change of pace—as well as some dangerous makeup involving his transformation into a brain-possessed madman. The makeup artist on the film was none other than aging maestro Jack Pierce, who had long since departed the Universal studios where he had helped create some of the screen's classic monsters of the thirties and forties.



"I didn't mind playing a bad guy," Agar remarked. "In fact, it was fun doing something a little different. When I was taken over by the brain, I wore false teeth and full contact lenses that were painted silver. It never occurred to them the paint might chip off in my eyes. Every time I blinked, little flecks of that silver paint would come loose. It felt like I had sand in my eyes! After about 45 minutes, I really went out of my mind. Aside from that, it turned out to be a lot of fun to do—but to be honest, we didn't think it would ever see the light of day."

The AROUS project was followed by 1959's INVISIBLE INVADERS, a cheap but crudely eerie programmer about invisible aliens who possess human corpses in order to wipe out life on Earth. The movie, directed by sci-fi journeyman Edward L. Cahn, featured zombie scenes torchshadowing images that would disturb NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD audiences nine years later.

"Movies like INVISIBLE INVADERS had to be done quick and cheap," explained Agar, who played a no-nonsense Army major in a cast that also featured John Carradine as a scientist-turned-zombie. "It was another case of do the best you can with what you've got, get the job done and don't get out of there! Ed Cahn did the best he could under the circumstances. You have to admire a guy like that."

At the beginning of the sixties, Agar joined Julie Adams and old friend Richard Arlen for the family drama RAYMIF (1960). He then appeared in 1961's I AM A GIRL (also known as I SET IT). That same year, under the direction of fellow actor Gene Nelson, Agar played another monster in 20th Century-Fox's grim blend of sci-fi and horror HAND OF DEATH (also known as FIVE FINGERS OF DEATH).

"That was the first picture Gene directed, and I thought he did a good job," Agar remarked. "I played this doctor whose experiments backfire on him, and he turns into this horrible monster. They padded up a pair of long Johns to make me look like I was 400 pounds. Then we had this hideous monster mask and these oversized creature hands that made me look burned and scarred by radiation. I remember one day when Martin, our oldest son, came onto the set with his mother. He was just a little boy—no more

than two or three. When he heard my voice coming out of the monster, it just about scared him to death! It took me a while to explain things and get him calmed down."

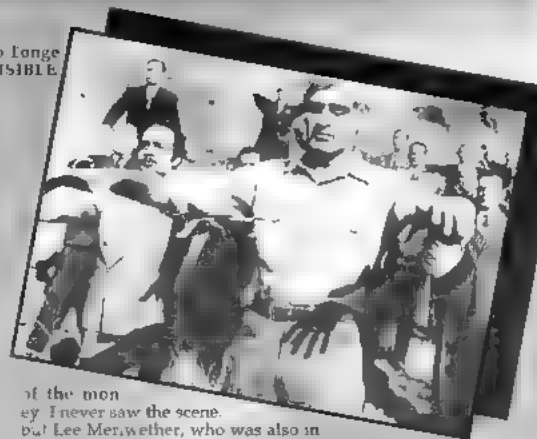
Agar's cumbersome HAND OF DEATH costume caused problems only during the filming of the final scene. "We were out on the beach at Malibu. I'm running toward the ocean, trying to get away from the police while they're trying to shoot me. When they finally killed me, I had to fall in the water with the waves splashing and knocking me around in all directions. With that mask on, I couldn't see anything! It had shifted around on my head so that the eye holes didn't match up with my eyes. The waves were crashing in on me, and I still had to pretend I was dead. That was a weird feeling."

After HAND OF DEATH, Agar made a rare overseas journey to Denmark to shoot the outer-space thriller JOURNEY TO THE SILVENTH PLANET (1962). The story, coscripted by Ib Melchior, involved a United Nations space mission to Uranus, where astronauts discover a hostile alien brain that can fulfill their fantasies or transform their worst fears into reality. The American International release was directed and coscripted by Sidney W. Pink.

"My wife Lorretta and our son Martin went over with me to Denmark, and we had a nice time," Agar recalled. "I don't know what got fouled up, but when we came home, they called us back in to redub most of the dialogue. We did that over at AIP. So most of it was shot in Denmark, but we redubbed all the dialogue and shot a couple of scenes here and there after we came back to the States."

The SEVENTH PLANET film marked Agar's last sci-fi feature for the next four years. In the interim he enjoyed supporting roles in the romantic drama OF LOVE AND DEATH (1963) and the MGM war film THE YOUNG AND THE BRAVE (both 1963). That same year he starred in the foreign-lensed, low-budget action film CAVALRY COMMAND. In 1964 Agar began a fruitful three-year relationship with Paramount, where he joined a company of aging Hollywood stars and veteran character actors for a series of traditional Westerns supervised by producer A.C. Lyles. The series offered Agar a chance to establish himself as a reliable character actor with roles in LAW OF THE LAWLESS (1964) with Dale Robertson and Yvonne De Carlo,

FAGE 72: Robert Hutton, Jean Byron, John Agar, and Philip Longe react violently to the reanimated dead (RIGHT) in INVISIBLE INVADERS (1959).



of the monster. I never saw the scene. But Lee Meriwether, who was also in that picture, said she saw it and that it was quite touching. I'm not sure why they cut it out except that the movie was too long."

McLaglen and Wayne made amends by casting Agar in a single-scene supporting role in another major Western, the box-office bonanza CHISUM (1970). Just as THE UNDEFEATED had reunited the stars of SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON 20 years afterward, CHISUM brought together HANDS OF TWO JIMMIES' Alvin Karpis, Agar, Forrest Tucker, and Richard Jaeckel. Agar appeared as a storekeeper in a scene with Wayne and Ben Johnson.

"It was always an honor working with Wayne, no matter what size role," Agar remarked. "There wasn't any phony about that guy. You knew exactly where he was coming from, and people respected him for that—even those that didn't agree with him. When it came to acting, he looked at it the same way I do. It's a job, and you take it seriously. You show up on time, know your lines, and do your part. I never considered myself a star, but I worked with a lot of them, and they're few and far between. John Wayne was a star, and we need more guys like him in the picture business today."

With film offers scarce at the dawn of the seventies, the 50-year-old Agar was grateful to be included in another Wayne hit in 1971—George Sherman's violent, suspenseful BIG JAKE. Playing Wayne's ranch foreman, Agar had no screen time with the movie's male star, but did share one flavorful scene with its female lead, Maureen O'Hara. Agar also endured a brutal, bloody death at the hands of the movie's scene-stealing villain—Richard Boone as a greedy, sadistic outlaw.

"Boone got even with me for killing him in STAR IN THE DUST," Agar laughed. "After all those years he finally got his revenge!"

A couple of years after BIG JAKE, Wayne and Agar found themselves mourning the death of their mentor, John Ford, who died in 1973 at the age of 79. "I never worked with Ford again after SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON, but I kept in contact with him over the years. I went to see him at his home one time, when he was older and not doing too well. His wife, Mary, met me at the door. It was one in the afternoon, and he was lying up in his bed in his pajamas. It was right after Mother's Day, and Mary said, 'Would you believe that, he didn't even wish me happy Mother's Day?' Ford said, 'Why should I? You're not my mother.' That was just his way of looking at things."

By the early seventies, Westerns and sci-fi films had fallen out of favor with movie audiences. Agar did a little-known, apparently unreleased film called HOW'S YOUR

STAGE TO THUNDER ROCK (1964) with Barry Sullivan and Marilyn Maxwell, YOUNG FURY (1965) with Rory Calhoun and Virginia Mayo, WACO (1966) with Howard Keel and Jane Russell, and JOHNNY RIVO (1966) with Dana Andrews and Russell. In addition to Agar, the supporting casts featured such familiar faces as Arlen, Bruce Cabot, Lon Chaney Jr., and Gene Evans.

"Those were fun to do," Agar said. "I worked with some old friends and made some new ones. Those weren't the best pictures ever made, but they were good, old-fashioned Westerns. I've always enjoyed that kind of picture, and I think they entertained people."

Agar teamed with two other Hollywood veterans, Wendell Corey and Keith Larsen, for Arthur C. Pierce's threadbare sci-fi film of 1966, WOMEN OF THE PLANET. (The movie's tag line says it all: "It's the battle of the sexes as savage planet women attack female space invaders.") That same year, Agar signed a package deal with Texas-based filmmaker Larry Buchanan to star in a trio of ultra-low-budget features. Under Buchanan's shaky, amateurish direction, AIP's IT CONQUERED THE WORLD (1966) became ZONTAR, THE THING FROM VENUS (1966), the horror thriller Voodoo Woman (1967) was remade as THE CURSE OF THE SWAMP CRAWLERS (1966), and SUICIDE BATTALION was modified into HELL RAIDERS (1968).

"He had worked out some kind of deal with Sam Arkoff at American International," Agar explained. "They paid him a certain amount of money to take some of their older pictures and redo them under new titles. Now, these were B movies to start with, and this time around they were made for even smaller budgets! I went down to Texas to make those things. The special effects and production values were pretty much nonexistent. Larry wasn't a trained director. He had done a few movies, but he was still learning things as he went. He was pretty good to me, though. I had serious doubts that those things would be released. I did them purely for the money."

In the same vein, Agar starred as the sheriff in a low-budget 1967 horror film, NIGHT FRIGHT. The plot concerned government space experiments unleashing a mutant monster on a helpless rural community. Working for the first time with celebrated producer-director Roger Corman, Agar played a decent supporting role in 1967's THE ST. VALENTINE'S DAY MASSACRE, a gangster drama starring Jason Robards as Al Capone.

At the end of the decade, Agar made a long-overdue return to big-budget moviemaking when director Andrew V. McLaglen (son of Ford favorite Victor McLaglen) and producer/star John Wayne reunited surviving members of Ford's stock company for THE UNDEFEATED (1969). The sweeping, action-packed Western cosetted Wayne and Agar's fellow Universal player, Rock Hudson, in a tale of Union and Confederate army veterans who reluctantly join forces in post-Civil War Mexico. Agar and his SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON costars Ben Johnson and Harry Carey Jr. were cast in vivid supporting roles as members of Wayne's Union Cavalry command. However, when THE UNDEFEATED was released, Agar's character—an ailing soldier who dies on the long horse drive south of the border—was cut from the final print.

"I worked on that one longer than just about any other picture," Agar explained. "The movie started out in the Civil War, when we're all under Duke's command. When the war ends, we all follow Duke and start rounding up horses. The scene Duke and I had together was right after we start the drive. We were both on horseback, and I had grown a beard for the first time. He and I both know I'm going to die, and he promises to send my family my share



Continued on page 75

"I didn't mind playing a bad guy," Agar remarked. "In fact, it was fun doing something a little different. When I was taken over by the brain, I wore false teeth and full contact lenses that were painted silver. It never occurred to them the paint might chip off in my eyes. Every time I blinked, little flecks of that silver paint would come loose. It felt like I had sand in my eyes! After about 45 minutes, I really went out of my mind! Aside from that, it turned out to be a lot of fun to do—but to be honest, we didn't think it would ever see the light of day."

The AROUS project was followed by 1959's *INVISIBLE INVADERS*, a cheap but crudely eerie programmer about invisible aliens who possess human corpses in order to wipe out life on Earth. The movie, directed by sci-fi journeyman Edward L. Cahn, featured zombie scenes foreshadowing images that would disturb *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* audiences nine years later.

"Movies like *INVISIBLE INVADERS* had to be done quick and cheap," explained Agar, who played a no-nonsense Army major in a cast that also featured John Carradine as a scientist-turned-zombie. "It was another case of do the best you can with what you've got, get the job done, and then get out of there! Ed Cahn did the best he could under the circumstances. You have to admire a guy like that."

At the beginning of the sixties, Agar joined Julie Adams and old friend Richard Arlen for the family drama *RAYMIF* (1960). He then appeared in 1961's *FALL GIRL* (also known as *LISETTE*). That same year, under the direction of fellow actor Gene Nelson, Agar played another monster in 20th Century-Fox's grim blend of sci-fi and horror, *HAND OF DEATH* (also known as *FIVE FINGERS OF DEATH*).

"That was the first picture Gene directed, and I thought he did a good job," Agar remarked. "I played this doctor whose experiments backfire on him, and he turns into this horrible monster. They padded up a pair of long Johns to make me look like I was 400 pounds. Then we had this hideous monster mask and these oversized creature hands that made me look burned and scarred by radiation. I remember one day when Martin, our oldest son, came onto the set with his mother. He was just a little boy, no more

than two or three. When he heard my voice coming out of the monster, it just about scared him to death! It took me a while to explain things and get him calmed down."

Agar's cumbersome *HAND OF DEATH* costume caused problems only during the filming of the final scene. "We were out on the beach at Malibu. I'm running toward the ocean, trying to get away from the police while they're trying to shoot me. When they finally killed me, I had to fall in the water with the waves splashing and knocking me around in all directions. With that mask on, I couldn't see anything! It had shifted around on my head so that the eye holes didn't match up with my eyes. The waves were crashing in on me, and I still had to pretend I was dead. That was a weird feeling."

After *HAND OF DEATH*, Agar made a rare overseas journey to Denmark to shoot the outer-space thriller *JOURNEY TO THE SEVENTH PLANET* (1962). The story, coscripted by Ib Melchior, involved a United Nations space mission to Uranus where astronauts discover a hostile alien brain that can fulfill their fantasies or transform their worst fears into reality. The American-International release was directed and coscripted by Sidney W. Pink.

"My wife Loretta and our son Martin went over with me to Denmark, and we had a nice time," Agar recalled. "I don't know what got fouled up, but when we came home, they called us back in to redub most of the dialogue. We did that over at AIP. So most of it was shot in Denmark, but we redubbed all the dialogue and shot a couple of scenes here and there after we came back to the States."

The *SEVENTH PLANET* film marked Agar's last sci-fi feature for the next four years. In the interim he enjoyed supporting roles in the romantic drama *OF LOVE AND DESIRE* and the MGM war film *THE YOUNG AND THE BRAVE* (both 1963). That same year he starred in the foreign-lensed, low budget action film *CAVALRY COMMAND*. In 1964 Agar began a fruitful three-year relationship with Paramount, where he joined a company of aging Hollywood stars and veteran character actors for a series of traditional Westerns supervised by producer A.C. Lyles. The series offered Agar a chance to establish himself as a reliable character actor with roles in *LAW OF THE LAWLESS* (1964) with Dale Robertson and Yvonne De Carlo,



**PAGE 72: Robert Hutton, Jean Byron, John Agar, and Philip Tonge react violently to the reanimated dead (RIGHT) in *INVISIBLE INVADERS* (1959).**

**STAGE TO THUNDER ROCK** (1964) with Barry Sullivan and Marilyn Maxwell, **YOUNG FURY** (1965) with Rory Calhoun and Virginia Mayo, **WACO** (1966) with Howard Keel and Jane Russell, and **JOHNNY RENO** (1966) with Dana Andrews and Russell. In addition to Agar, the supporting casts featured such familiar faces as Arlen, Bruce Cabot, Lon Chaney Jr., and Gene Evans.

"Those were fun to do," Agar said. "I worked with some old friends and made some new ones. Those weren't the best pictures ever made, but they were good, old-fashioned Westerns. I've always enjoyed that kind of picture, and I think they entertained people."

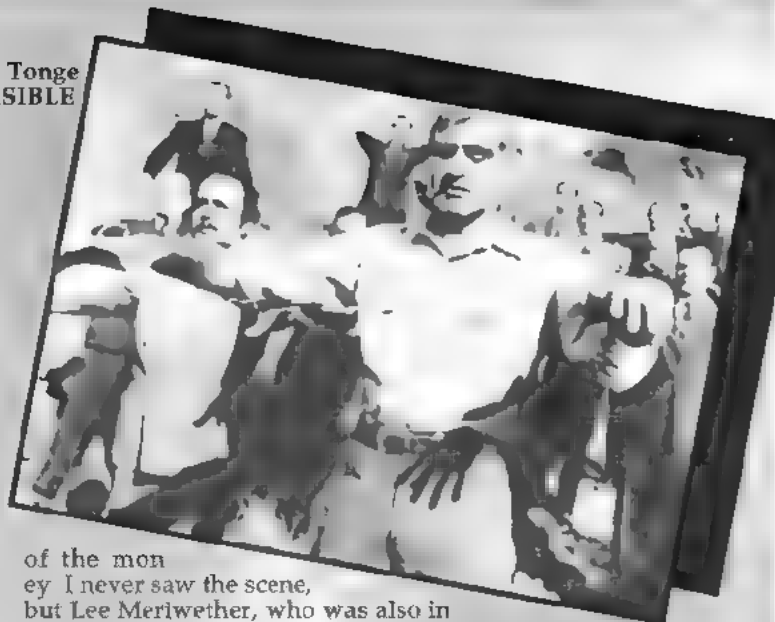
Agar teamed with two other Hollywood veterans, Wendell Corey and Keith Larsen, for Arthur C. Pierce's threadbare sci-fi film of 1966, **WOMEN OF THE PREHISTORIC PLANET** (The movie's tag line says it all: "It's the battle of the sexes as savage planet women attack female space invaders!") That same year, Agar signed a package deal with Texas-based filmmaker Larry Buchanan to star in a trio of ultra-low-budget features. Under Buchanan's shaky, amateurish direction, AIP's **IT CONQUERED THE WORLD** (1956) became **ZONTAR, THE THING FROM VENUS** (1966), the horror thriller **VOODOO WOMAN** (1957) was remade as **THE CURSE OF THE SWAMP CREATURE** (1966), and **SUICIDE BATTALION** was modified into **HELL RAIDERS** (1968).

"He had worked out some kind of deal with Sam Arkoff at American International," Agar explained. "They paid him a certain amount of money to take some of their older pictures and redo them under new titles. Now, these were B movies to start with, and this time around they were made for even smaller budgets! I went down to Texas to make those things. The special effects and production values were pretty much nonexistent. Larry wasn't a trained director. He had done a few movies, but he was still learning things as he went. He was pretty good to me, though. I had serious doubts that those things would be released. I did them purely for the money."

In the same vein, Agar starred as the sheriff in a low-budget 1967 horror film, **NIGHT FRIGHT**. The plot concerned government space experiments unleashing a mutant monster on a helpless rural community. Working for the first time with celebrated producer/director Roger Corman, Agar played a decent supporting role in 1967's **THE ST. VALENTINE'S DAY MASSACRE**, a gangster drama starring Jason Robards as Al Capone.

At the end of the decade, Agar made a long overdue return to big-budget moviemaking when director Andrew V. McLaglen (son of Ford favorite Victor McLaglen) and producer/star John Wayne reunited surviving members of Ford's stock company for **THE UNDEFEATED** (1969). The sweeping, action-packed Western costarred Wayne and Agar's fellow Universal player, Rock Hudson, in a tale of Union and Confederate army veterans who reluctantly join forces in post-Civil War Mexico. Agar and his **SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON** costars Ben Johnson and Harry Carey Jr. were cast in vivid supporting roles as members of Wayne's Union Cavalry command. However, when **THE UNDEFEATED** was released, Agar's character—an aging soldier who dies on the long horse drive south of the border—was cut from the final print.

"I worked on that one longer than just about any other picture," Agar explained. "The movie started out in the Civil War, when we're all under Duke's command. When the war ends, we all follow Duke and start rounding up horses. The scene Duke and I had together was right after we start the drive. We were both on horseback, and I had grown a beard for the first time. He and I both know I'm going to die, and he promises to send my family my share



of the money I never saw the scene, but Lee Meriwether, who was also in that picture, said she saw it and that it was quite touching. I'm not sure why they cut it out, except that the movie was too long."

McLaglen and Wayne made amends by casting Agar in a single-scene supporting role in another major Western, the box-office bonanza **CHISUM** (1970). Just as **THE UNDEFEATED** had reunited the stars of **SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON** 20 years afterward, **CHISUM** brought together **SANDS OF IWO JIMA** alumni Wayne, Agar, Forrest Tucker, and Richard Jaeckel. Agar appeared as a storekeeper in a scene with Wayne and Ben Johnson.

"It was always an honor working with Wayne, no matter what size role," Agar remarked. "There wasn't any phoniness about that guy. You knew exactly where he was coming from, and people respected him for that—even those that didn't agree with him. When it came to acting, he looked at it the same way I do. It's a job, and you take it seriously. You show up on time, know your lines, and do your part. I never considered myself a star, but I worked with a lot of them, and they're few and far between. John Wayne was a star, and we need more guys like him in the picture business today."

With film offers scarce at the dawn of the seventies, the 50-year-old Agar was grateful to be included in another Wayne hit in 1971—George Sherman's violent, suspenseful **BIG JAKE**. Playing Wayne's ranch foreman, Agar had no screen time with the movie's male star, but did share one flavorful scene with its female lead, Maureen O'Hara. Agar also endured a brutal, bloody death at the hands of the movie's scene-stealing villain, Richard Boone as a greedy, sadistic outlaw.

"Boone got even with me for killing him in **STAR IN THE DUST**," Agar laughed. "After all those years he finally got his revenge!"

A couple of years after **BIG JAKE**, Wayne and Agar found themselves mourning the death of their mentor, John Ford, who died in 1973 at the age of 79. "I never worked with Ford again after **SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON**, but I kept in contact with him over the years. I went to see him at his home one time, when he was older and not doing too well. His wife, Mary, met me at the door. It was one in the afternoon, and he was lying up in his bed in his pajamas. It was right after Mother's Day, and Mary said, 'Would you believe that he didn't even wish me happy Mother's Day?' Ford said, 'Why should I? You're not my mother.' That was just his way of looking at things."

By the early seventies, Westerns and sci-fi films had fallen out of favor with movie audiences. Agar did a little-known, apparently unreleased film called **HOW'S YOUR**

*Continued on page 75*



# BOOK ENDS

## The Scarlet Street Review of Books

### THE TRAGEDY OF ERRORS

Ellery Queen

Crippen & Landru Publishers, 1999

PO Box 9315

Norfolk, VA 23505

224 pages—\$16

Ellery Queen doesn't get any respect; nope, not either of him! (Ellery was, of course, the cousins Frederic Dannay and Manfred B. Lee—hence the plurality of our—uh, my complaint.) Though Queen was one of the leading lights of the Golden Age of Detective Fiction, the majority of Ellery Queen mysteries are out of print and have been for decades.

This sorry situation changed dramatically in 1999 with the publication of *The Tragedy of Errors*, a never-before-published Queen novel—or, more accurately, detailed plot outline, because Lee died before he could flesh out Dannay's synopsis into an actual novel and the book was never completed. Nevertheless, it makes for fascinating reading, and is an object lesson in how to construct a crackling good detective story.

Better than *The Tragedy of Errors* itself, though, are a series of essays covering the entire Queen phenomena, from the novels to radio ("A Challenge to the Listener: Ellery Queen on the Air," by David S. Siegel) to comics ("Challenged to the Artist: The Comic Book stories of Ellery Queen," by Mike W. Barr) and all points in between. Several tributes are penned by family members, including one by

David Wayne and Jim Hutton as Richard and Ellery Queen starred in the seventies TV version of the master detective's adventures.



Manfred Lee's son, Rand, which movingly brings the elder Lee to life and includes some valuable writing advice. ("When you finish your first draft of a story, go back and cross out every adjective and adverb. Then put in only those adjectives and adverbs you feel you really need.") And for the truly insatiable, this fine volume from Crippen & Landru contains six uncollected short stories, including the classic (if Queenless) "Terror Town."

Hopefully, *The Tragedy of Errors* will spark some interest in getting the rest of Ellery Queen back in print. Even if it does, don't miss out on adding this essential book to your cozy little library—the one with the dead body and the dying clue scrawled in blood on the floor.

—Richard Valley

### THE PETER CUSHING COMPANION

David Miller

Reynolds & Hearn Ltd., 2000

192 pages—\$29.95

It has been six years since the death of Peter Cushing, Britain's greatest horror star. Now, David Miller (editor of the superb British magazine *Shivers*) has brought the beloved actor back to us again in this must-have book.

*The Peter Cushing Companion* fills in the gaps left by Cushing in his own two biographical efforts, *An Autobiography* (1986) and *Past Forgetting* (1988), with interviews from those who knew him. Refreshingly, the book shows us a flawed man instead of a plaster saint, one who angered producers and later in life admitted to three extramarital affairs. By demystifying him, Miller offers us the real Peter Cushing, and as a result we find him more fascinating than ever before.

Though the book adds little to our knowledge of Cushing's horror films, it is a treasure trove of information about his long-unseen TV work, and covers his non-horror films in great detail. Also eye-opening are many rare program covers and pictures. My advice: you won't find a worthier reading companion than *The Peter Cushing Companion*.

—Kevin G. Shinnick

### UNEASY DREAMS

Gary A. Smith

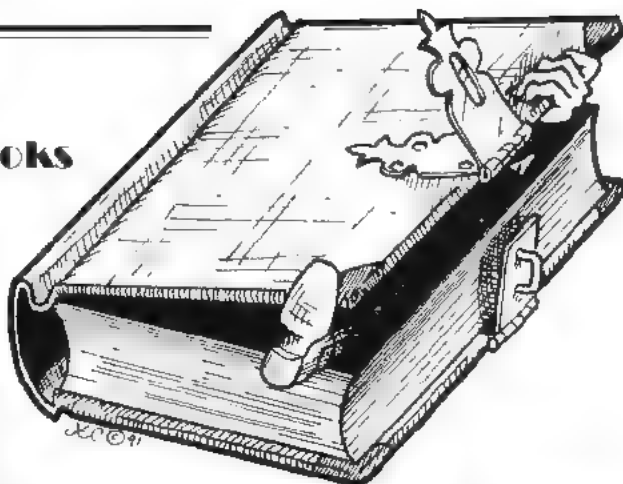
McFarland & Company, Inc., 2000

Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640

267 pages—\$49.95

British horror is suddenly a hot topic in publishing, with several books coming out in the space of a few months covering the general history of British horror cinema, as well as such specific studios as Amicus.

In *Uneasy Dreams: The Golden Age Of British Horror Films, 1956-1976*, Gary A.



Smith, an Anglo-horrorphile, examines over 319 films, but does so without a definite pattern and steps outside the parameters he sets for himself. For example, he covers *THE GHOUL* (1933), but skips the Bela Lugosi starrer *MYSTERY OF THE MARIE CELESTE* (1936, and one of Hammer's earliest attempts at a spooky story), but then includes Lugosi's *DARK EYES OF LONDON* (1939). *WELCOME TO BLOOD CITY* (1977), included in this study, was released a year after the author's set time limits.

Smith arranges his titles alphabetically, though the book would have been better served by listing them chronologically, the better to see more clearly the rise and fall of British fantasy films. Still, *Uneasy Dreams* is a valuable source for synopses of obscure films and a useful addition to the film reference library.

Kevin G. Shinnick

### SCREEN SIRENS SCREAM

Paul Parla and Charles P. Mitchell

McFarland & Company, Inc 1999

248 pages—\$46

Paul Parla's name is familiar to readers of the fun monster mag, *Scary Monsters*. He and his wife, Donna, are past experts at tracking down genre movie actors, particularly those from the fifties. For *Screen Sirens Scream*, Parla has collaborated with writer Charles P. Mitchell to interview 20 actresses who have defended Earth and their virtue—not necessarily in that order—from fiends from both inner and outer space. Some of the interviews are reprints or expansions on pieces that have appeared elsewhere, but here they are gathered in one easy-to-reference book.

The performers range from Faith Domergue to June Wilkinson. Parla deserves credit for finding Marilyn Harris, little Maria from the original *FRANKENSTEIN* (1931). Poor Marilyn suffered far worse at the hands of her mother than she ever did from Boris Karloff! It was only after she married and left the business at age 19 that she began to enjoy her life. The interviewers could have been more probing with their questions, rather than leapfrogging quickly from one film to another. Nevertheless, with several of these leading ladies now gone, we should be grateful for the quotes and stories they have shared with us.

—Kevin G. Shinnick

## JOHN AGAR

Continued from page 73

LOVE LIFE? (1971) before abandoning screen work for business interests in real estate and insurance. It was during this time that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences mistakenly reported that Agar was dead. Hearing the sad but erroneous news, magazine editor Forrest J Ackerman prepared to eulogize the sci-fi icon in the April 1974 issue of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*. The confusion was finally cleared up once a fan recognized Agar at a Los Angeles convention and insisted that he speak to Ackerman, who happened to be attending the same affair.

"He found the whole thing very amusing and was happy to pose for a picture to prove that he is still very much in the land of the living," Ackerman wrote in his modified obituary, "The Living Ghost John Agar, Dead at 52," published in *Famous Monsters* #106. "And since our story about his demise was already set in print, we decided we might as well go ahead and run it as a tribute to a living actor rather than a eulogy to a dead one."

During that same period, Agar befriended one of Hollywood's down-and-out schlock artists—Edward D. Wood Jr., the ill-fated maker of the camp classics *GLEN OR GLENDA* (1953) and *PLAN NINE FROM OUTER SPACE* (1959). "When I lived over in Studio City, I knew a hypnotist by the name of Baron John Von Brenner. He was said to be the only man to have hypnotized Adolph Hitler. He introduced me to Ed Wood. He was down on his luck at that time, and we had another mutual friend at the time—Peter Coe, one of the guys I worked with on *IWO JIMA*. Ed wanted me to do some pictures with him, but he never could get the money together to do them. He was a nice guy—the kind of guy you wish had had a happier life. Things just didn't seem to go his way."

Agar happened to be at Wood's apartment, discussing those potential film projects, when a Los Angeles television station issued another false report of the actor's demise. "Ed got all upset, and he called the TV station. He said, 'John Agar's not dead. He's alive! He's sitting right here with me.' I guess I just didn't have enough sense to lie down!"

With reports of his death greatly exaggerated, Agar returned to the screen in 1976 for the year's most eagerly anticipated fantasy film—Dino de Laurentiis' controversial version of the cherished beauty-and-the-beast classic *KING KONG*. Playing the unscrupulous mayor of New York, Agar represented one of the few highpoints of director John Guillermin's ill-advised remake.

"I think they missed the boat entirely with that one," Agar observed. "Near the end of the picture, Kong escapes in New York. Jeff Bridges' character realizes what Kong is going to do—he's sure he's going to climb to the top of the World Trade Center towers. So out of the blue, he calls me—but the audience has no idea who I am or why he should trust me. I'm playing this Jimmie Walker-type politician. It was like a whole scene was missing that should've explained why Jeff Bridges takes a chance and calls me. He trusts me, and I double-cross him. I have the jets blast Kong off the building! Then, at the end, they bring me back in that final scene with the girl—the scene by Kong's body. It's obvious that I don't care about the girl at all. I'm just after the publicity."

"A friend of mine said his son, who called me Uncle Jack and was about nine when he saw the movie, yelled 'Dad! Uncle Jack lied! He told him he wasn't gonna let anything happen to Kong and he lied! He's a dirty rat! But he sure looked nice in his tuxedo.'"

After *KING KONG*, Agar popped up in episodes of *POLICE STORY* and *CHARLIE'S ANGELS*. He didn't surface again until 1980, when he appeared in the little-seen Civil War drama *DIVIDED WE FALL*. The following year Agar joined Lloyd Bochner and Richard Jaeckel for *MR. NO LEGS*, the story of a man who loses both his legs in the ser-



**TOP:** John Ford veterans Arthur Shields and John Agar both found themselves in one of Edgar G. Ulmer ultra-low-budget horrors when the *DAUGHTER OF DR. JEKYLL* went on the prowl in 1957. **BOTTOM:** Agar, his wife Loretta, and the man who prematurely killed him in the pages of *Famous Monsters*—Forry Ackerman!

vice. The drama was directed in Florida by former Gill Man Ricou Browning, who had since moved on to a successful career as a director and second-unit director. In 1984, Agar played an aging cowboy star on television's *HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN* and also appeared in an episode of the revived *TWILIGHT ZONE* series.

"For the first 20 years I was an actor, I was scared to death," Agar confessed. "I never could really calm down. Finally I learned just to relax and enjoy myself. Now I just enjoy the heck out of acting, even though I think it's something inside me that kind of lies dormant. Then you get on that set, and suddenly you've pushed a new button. You say to yourself, 'Let's get it on.'"

By the late eighties, Agar had attained iconic status in the field of sci-fi moviemaking, and suddenly a new generation of talented young directors began to call on the legendary John Agar to appear in their own genre films. "The films I've done in recent years have been very small roles. I always enjoy working, but I have certain standards before I agree to do a picture. I won't use any profanity. I've done a couple of pictures that had too much blood in them—the violence was too graphic for my taste. I think Hollywood needs to go back to letting the audience use their imagination. To me, it all boils down to substance. The story doesn't seem to matter anymore. The only thing that matters is how much money it'll make."

A rare exception was the 1989 cult favorite *MIRACLE MILE*, Steve DeJarnatt's low-key, thought-provoking drama

in which a young musician (Anthony Edwards) discovers that the end of the world is less than a hour away. Agar played the plum supporting role of Ivan Peters, the grandfather of Edwards' girlfriend (Mare Winningham).

"That one had a lot going for it—it had good actors and a good director, who also wrote the script," Agar remarked. "It was a different kind of picture, and he worked on putting the thing together for something like 10 years. The sad thing is that it got lost in the shuffle when it was finally released. It came out the same time as BATMAN and GHOSTBUSTERS II and a lot of other big-budget things. It didn't have a chance."

The next year Agar played another villainous role in FEAR (1990), a horror thriller in which a psychic (Ally Sheedy) is recruited to search for a psychotic killer (Agar). "I played this psycho who's riding around with a girl tied up in the back of his car. At the end, I have her tied up in this barn when the police finally locate me. When the police come in, I was supposed to go over to this workbench and get a gun. When the first shot hit me, the squibs were supposed to go off. I was supposed to hit the workbench with the lower part of my backside, then throw myself up in the air. After they shot me a second time, they wanted me to put my elbow on the workbench and then roll off onto the ground. Well, when we did it, my elbow missed. I fell off and hit the ground hard. I cracked my ribs, but I never said a word about it. I was too embarrassed!"

Agar remained in the horror field for 1990's NIGHTBREED, writer/director Clive Barker's screen adaptation of his own dark, otherworldly monster novel, *Cabal* (1988). Agar played a crazy hermit bound up by Christmas lights and tortured by a sadistic, murderous psychiatrist (played by Canadian filmmaker David Cronenberg).

"I kind of stumbled into that one in a weird way," Agar recalled. "They had shot most of the picture in England. When they started putting it all together, they realized that a lot of it didn't make sense. There were some of the Nightbreed monsters who could be killed by gunfire, but there were others that bullets wouldn't affect. The same thing with fire—some it affected, some it didn't. There were all these inconsistencies, so they had to do something else to explain what was going on."

Agar enjoyed working with Barker and Cronenberg, but he found the finished product less than appetizing. "I had no idea what the rest of the picture would be like. I went into this thing at the last minute, and I only worked on it for a day, so I didn't know exactly what I was getting into. When I saw it, I thought it was all shock value and very little story. It was way too bloody for my taste."

In the 1980s, Agar also became friends with HALLOWEEN director John Carpenter, who had hoped to cast the veteran actor in his long-envisioned remake of CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON. Although that tantalizing project never materialized, Carpenter did cast Agar in his 1993 horror anthology film, BODY BAGS.

"That was another gory one," Agar noted. "John was a producer and one of the directors. The one I did was directed by Tobe Hooper. Roger Corman and I played surgeons in this segment with Mark Hamill. It was fun to do, but when I saw it, I thought the thing was too bloody. That kind of ruined it for me. I think John Carpenter and Tobe Hooper are good enough directors that they don't have to rely on all that blood. Once again, I think it proves that we've lost our ability to let the audience use its imagination."

Agar has done little acting in recent years ("I don't even have an agent anymore"), but he remains popular with four generations of fans who celebrate his work in Westerns, war films, sci-fi thrillers, and horror chillers.

"I'm often asked to pick my best picture. I'm the worst judge in the world of the kind of work I do. I watch my old pictures occasionally, and I'm always thinking, 'Why did I do it that way?' or 'Why didn't I do it this way?' or 'Why on earth did I say it like that?' I learned early on to put my

complete trust in the director, whether it's John Ford or Jack Arnold or Larry Buchanan or John Carpenter. It's the director's movie, and he knows what he wants. The director can see what I'm doing, and it's up to him to let me know if it's right or wrong. That's his job."

Now in its sixth year, the John Agar Fan Club recently held a special celebration. Considered a lost film for decades, a print of HAND OF DEATH was recently discovered by 20th Century Fox, the studio that released the thriller close to 40 years ago. Through some deft legal maneuvering, the studio managed to secure permission to present the film to its star.

"They sent me a video copy of it," Agar explained. "The only stipulation is that I can't make any copies of it. So we had a big get-together in Burbank last April and showed it to friends and members of the fan club. It was a strange experience, seeing myself in that suit after all these years. It brought back some memories."

"When we were making those pictures, we never thought that they might be around 30 or 40 years later," admits Agar, whose wife of 49 years, Loretta, died early this year. "We might have thought some of the bigger pictures would last—ones like SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON or SANDS OF IWO JIMA or BREAKTHROUGH. But I never thought those science-fiction pictures would still be around today! I'm just glad people still enjoy them."

"You know, John Huston was asked once about billing, and he said, 'I don't care about billing. If it's a good film and I'm good in it, people are going to say 'Who was that?' If it's a bad film and I'm not any good in it, I don't want then to know I was in it!' I feel that way. Somebody else used to say, 'There's no such thing as a small part, only small actors.' And that's true. You can make a mark for yourself and have very little to do on the screen. And you can be on the screen and have a whole lot to do and really feel sorry you were on there at all!"

## MR. DONOVAN STEPS OUT

Continued from page 51

As Freddie Francis' career and reputation blossomed, he soon found his niche neatly carved in the genre of fantastic cinema. For Hammer Films, he directed such treats as THE EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN (1964) and the stunning DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE (1968). He also lent a hand to Hammer's rival, Amicus Pictures, DR. TEROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS (1965) and TALES FROM THE CRYPT (1972), among others. He later went on to direct the highly underrated THE DOCTOR AND THE DEVILS for Mel Brooks' film company in 1985.

In THE BRAIN, Francis shows a keen eye for the film's aesthetic. Even in the director's seat, he clearly visualizes the action from the cinematographer's perspective. The low camera angles and stark lighting used in THE BRAIN would surface again when he shot THE ELEPHANT MAN (1980)—also a black-and-white film—for David Lynch. His somewhat vertiginous use of closeups (such as Corrie's tapping thumb, and the faces of several characters) also appear in the film version of Frank Herbert's DUNE (1984), again shot for Lynch.

In his book-length study *Science Fiction in The Cinema* (1970, Paperback Library), John Baxter states, "The loss of personal individuality is probably the most common plot situation in sf film." This most certainly applies to what Curt Siodmak achieved with *Donovan's Brain*, and it's a theme that he had previously explored. Siodmak's themes for THE WOLF MAN go back to the struggle of the individual to overcome something greater and far more oppressive than himself. Larry Talbot's curse, then, can be seen as a metaphor for the Nazi uprising that Siodmak witnessed earlier in his life. In *Donovan's Brain*, this struggle continues

Continued on page 78



# CLASSIFIED

## WANT ADS DEAD OR ALIVE

**Deadline: September 30, 2000, for Issue 40 (October 2000). Basic Rate: 70 cents per word. \$15.00 minimum. Bold face and/or full caps add 40 cents per word (80 cents for both). Display ad, 2 1/4 X 2 1/4, \$70. Payment: check or money order, payable to Scarlet Street Inc., must accompany ad. Mail to: Scarlet Street Inc., PO Box 604, Glen Rock, NJ 07452.**

**TAPES OF TERROR!** Exploitation, Sexploitation, Sleaze, Cult, Slasher, XXX-Rated, Gore, Asian, Eurotrash, Obscure. \$2 Catalog: TOT, 11430 Mullins (SS), Houston, TX 77035-2632. [www.morticiasmorgue.com/tot.html](http://www.morticiasmorgue.com/tot.html)

**DAVID PEEL!** Seeking interviews with family, friends, and coworkers. Also bio info, behind-the-scenes photographs, stage photos, BRIDES OF DRACULA pressbook, anything and everything to do with this actor. Richard Valley, PO Box 604, Glen Rock, NJ 07452

**CELEBRITY ADDRESSES.** Our 25th year, over 17,000 addresses of movie, television, recording, fan clubs, birthdays & deceased lists. Send self-addressed stamped envelope for full details to: ACS, 5460 S.W. 57th Pl., Dept SS, Ocala, FL 34474.



## SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN

Continued from page 27

performance that does all but destroy her scenes

20th Century Fox's DVD boasts a gorgeous, crisp transfer. Oliver Stapelton's lush cinematography is well balanced, but feels a bit tight on top in this 2:35 ratio. Simon Boswell's score is nicely presented in Dolby and 5.1 Surround. The DVD offers the film's original trailer (presented in 1.85) and has English and Spanish subtitles, but that's it in terms of supplements. A great film, but at \$34.99, it's a bit steep for a DVD with few extras.

—Jeff Allen

## ELVIS LIVES!

Continued from page 16

Angela Lansbury, as Elvis' brainless, overbearing Southern mama, mugging beyond redemption.

Something of an improvement over these, ROUSTABOUT (1964) is of interest because it is the only time Presley acted opposite a genuine superstar from Hollywood's Golden Era, Barbara Stanwyck. (Interestingly, Elvis starred in 1957's LOVING YOU opposite a lesser luminary of the past, Elizabeth Scott. Stanwyck's rival in 1946's film noir classic THE STRANGE LOVE OF MARTHA IVERS.) Dressed in a rather butch wardrobe of dungarees and flannel shirts, Stanwyck is a carnival owner who hires warbling wanderer Charlie Rogers (Elvis) to work as a roustabout. She quickly realizes, however, that he is more of an attraction as a singer

The songs include "It's a Wonderful World," sung by Elvis on a ferris wheel, and "Wheels on My Heels," sung by Elvis on a motorcycle; while such people as Sue Ane Langdon (as an oversexed spiritualist), Raquel Welch (as a college student), Teri Garr (as a midway dancer), Billy Barty (playing a dwarf), and Richard Kiel (not playing a dwarf) round out the cast.

The four DVDs (priced at \$19.99 each) contain colorful cover art and an insert page indicating chapter stops (although the one for KING CREOLE only cues you in on the first half of the movie). The transfers (all letterboxed) are good, with only BLUE HAWAII showing occasional wear and tear, and each film contains the original trailer, capturing the sort of bygone hype that proclaims BLUE HAWAII as "The Musical Lu-WOW of the Year!"

Barry Monush

## CRIMSON CHRONICLES

Continued from page 32

vie buff, and he was projecting F.P.1 To his horror, the last reel was missing! He turned on the lights and was about to give the money back to the audience when I spoke up, "I've seen the picture many times," so I described the climax in English and Peter translated it into German. When his son was born, he middle-named him Forrest. Danke schoen, Peter!

Once in Berlin, I sat next to Curt at a revival of his INVISIBLE AGENT. I was in the private audience at a revival of his TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL. I have read the script of his musical Frankenstein play. I met the future Nancy Reagan on the set of the Lew Ayres version of DONOVAN'S BRAIN. I have gazed in awe and envy at the set of first editions that his great admirer, Stephen King, has inscribed to him. His wife Henrietta is creating a handsewn portrait for me of Brigitte Helm as she appeared in the erotic Yoshiwara sequence of METROPOLIS. I have been entertained in the Siodmasks' home with Ron "Graven Images" Borst and his wife, Margaret, and my wife, Wendayne "Rocket to the Rue Morgue" Ackerman. I have fed their little family of raccoons, watched a pheasant spread its wings in their backyard, dined on Henrietta's

gourmet dinners, listened in engrossed silence for hours to Siodmakian anecdotes. He is a unique individual.

Most recently, at the LA County Museum, they had an evening devoted to the legendary German silent film that was Curt's idea: MENSCHEN AM SONNTAG (PEOPLE ON SUNDAY). I spotted him seated in the audience, knelt down beside him, put my arm around him, and surprised him by saying, "I'd like to buy a dozen eggs from Lake Tanganyika!" In 1982, I had the pleasure of including his 1926 Tanganyika tale in the first hardcover volume of *The Gemsback Awards* and awarding him a trophy.

Get ahold of Siodmak's fascinating autobiography, *Even a Man Who is Pure in Heart*, if you can. I saluted him on his 90th birthday, I anticipate with greatest pleasure watching him blow out the candles on his 100th. No one can hold a candle to Curt Siodmak!



## CURT SIODMAK

Continued from page 44

venture—the mother of adventure of homosexuality! And they hated each other, hated each other! I didn't need to direct them; they just looked at each other and flames came out of their eyes!

SS: Perhaps that's why you suggested that there was a gay rivalry between them.

CS: Lon Chaney Jr. was an unhappy man. It's an old story. Let's be honest about it. How much did you talk to your parents? How much real contact did you have with them? How much do you know about them? Not enough, am I right? In the days when I was a child, when Lon was a child, parents didn't talk to their children. There was a time when as a boy you would be kissed by your father. I have a picture of my father; I can't even imagine that this man would have children! But I don't even remember that I got hugged by my parents, which leads to a very deep loss of longing for something you never had in your life because you need love to nurture

TO BE CONTINUED . . .

## MR. DONOVAN STEPS OUT

Continued from page 76

but is further complicated. When science tries to overreach its boundaries, there will always be unforeseen consequences—but when those consequences entail having the very essence of a person's being overtaken by a mysterious force, causing it to act against its will, the sci-fi becomes a most profane type of horror. Masterfully blending these elements in a novel is part of Siodmak's gift to us, the audience. Watching filmmakers and radio entertainers, for better or worse, bring these themes to life is not only a gift, but a privilege. We recognize the themes and stories as being an integral part of our human experience.

It's no accident that Siodmak's novel launched an entire series of remakes and inspired films using the storyline and themes originally found in *Donovan's Brain*. Its influences can be seen as recently as Jean-Pierre Jeunet's *THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN* (1995). What Curt Siodmak himself said of *THE WOLF MAN* can just as easily be applied to *Donovan's Brain*: "Yes, the damn thing is still popular today!"



## GENE EVANS

Continued from page 57

unit out there, so I had to wait while they sent to Jackson for another car. While I was sitting out there, I heard a dog crying. There was nothing else out here then, I came down the little drive, and there was a puppy on a chain that had gotten wound around a tree. I unwound him, and then I glanced up and thought I saw a reflection out there. I thought, 'What the hell could that be?' I walked down and thought, 'Oh, wow!' The woods went right down to the water's edge. It was just everything I was looking for, but they weren't interested in selling."

Evans bought the property four years later, when the owner moved to London. The actor made his final film 11 years later—Burt Kennedy's *ONCE UPON A TEXAS TRAIN*, a tongue-in-cheek 1988 TV Western starring Richard Widmark and Willie Nelson—and then retreated to his cherished Tennessee retirement home.

"It's heaven out here," Evans remarked. "I'll tell you what's nice—sitting here with a good book and a light rain-fall in the summertime. Then you read until your eyes get tired and go stretch out on the couch. It beats making movies any day of the week."

In November 1997, following Fuller's death at the age of 86, Evans made a rare return trip to California for a memorial service marking the death of his friend, teacher, and favorite director. During the visit, Evans was showered with affection and adoration by such contemporary Fuller disciples as Martin Scorsese, Quentin Tarantino, and Curtis Hanson.

"I don't have to sit here leafing through my scrapbooks, reliving the glory days and things I did 45 years ago," Evans observed. "The kind of movie Sammy made is still in—it's still pertinent and relevant. These guys were all kids when these pictures came out, but they worship them. Scorsese admitted one time that he stole a great shot from *THE STEEL HELMET* and used it in *RAGING BULL*. He said, 'Gene Evans had that beautifully acted scene where you could see Normandy and everything else right across his face, and Fuller had painted this ethereal awe across the screen.'"

Ironically, that now-classic scene was not in Fuller's original *STEEL HELMET* footage. Instead, it was the result of some desperate on-the-spot improvisation.

"After they made the picture, the editor said, 'We need something to go between here and here,'" Evans noted. "So

Sammy and I went over to some little joint that wasn't even a studio. He rented a camera, and it was just him and me. He said, 'Get down on the floor until I tell you to get back up.' Then he said, 'Raise up into the frame, and I want that dumb look that you get when you don't know what you're doing.' Sam smoked a cigar, you know, and that 'ethereal awe' Scorsese loved was his cigar smoke! Everything was out of focus, so that scene could have been anywhere. Yet it's one of the highlights of the picture. But that's Fuller—that's the way he did things."

Evans considered Fuller one of those rare directors who "did his homework" and made optimal use of his limited time on the set. "He had hunches, and he understood what he was doing. Unfortunately, I had to be there all the time when he was doing his homework. He'd pound on you and say, 'What do you think of this? What do you think of that?' He'd just wear you out. It wasn't really hard working for him, but he was just murder in the preparation. It was just over and over and over."

Another memorable *STEEL HELMET* story revolves around a now famous line of dialogue that Evans initially despised. Right after angrily emptying an M1 clip into an unarmed North Korean prisoner-of-war, the outraged Zack grabs the bleeding POW and screams, "If you die, I'll kill you."

"I told Sam the line bothered me," Evans recalled. "He said, 'Don't give me any shit! Just say the fucking line! Trust me. It will work.' So I said, 'But I've got to be able to feel this...' He said, 'Listen, this prisoner has just said that this kid that was with you got himself killed because he was stupid.' You whirl that M1 out, and suddenly this Korean prisoner of yours is down there bleeding like he's been gored by a bull. The audience is filled with tension. If you go in and say 'If you die, I'll kill you,' they're going to laugh. We've got to give them something to laugh at right there. If we don't, they're going to laugh at something we don't want them to laugh at because they're so nervous."

After the movie opened, Evans ventured into a theater, curious to gauge an audience's honest, objective reaction to his least-favorite line.

"It really wasn't a big laugh line—it was more like a great release of tension," the actor remembered. "I had a great writer tell me one time, 'Had your reading of that line been any other way, it would have been the downfall of the picture. As it is, it's brilliant.' That's when I thought to myself, 'Jesus! You idiot, you would have changed the line! You don't know your ass from first base!'"

Seven years ago, Evans—whose acting roles since his retirement were restricted to fund-raisers for the Jackson community theater he helped organize—briefly returned to the screen for a guest role on Angela Lansbury's CBS mystery series, *MURDER, SHE WROTE*. The role called for the actor to fly to New York City to record some post production dialogue. En route from the airport to the studio, Evans experienced a rather startling *STEEL HELMET* flashback.

"They're driving me from the airport into New York to loop these lines, and it's one stop light after another," he recalled. "We pull up to one, and there's this cab beside us. The driver's a big black dude with dreadlocks and everything. He looks at me, and I'm wondering, 'What's going on? Is he going to pull out some hog-leg and put a bullet behind my eyes because he thinks I look like some bad guy?' The light changes, and we get to the next stoplight. He's still looking at me. At the third stoplight, he rolls down his window to say something. So I roll my window down and the guy smiles and says, 'If you die, I'll kill you.'"

"After all these years, and as hard as I fought against saying it, it's the one line I said in my whole life that people seem to remember!"

READING SCARLET STREET FOR THE FIRST TIME? DON'T MISS OUR BACK ISSUES ON PAGES SIX AND SEVEN!

# RETURN OF UNIVERSAL APPEAL!

## Remote Control ROBBY THE ROBOT

Trendmasters Toys  
Working lights, sounds,  
walking motion, 10" tall!  
This is sure to be the most  
sought after collectible toy!  
Don't miss out! Order yours today!

**NEW! SERIES 3 UNIVERSAL MONSTER  
ACTION FIGURES FROM SIDE SHOW TOYS.**  
SERIES 1 AND 2 ALSO AVAILABLE

Mad Monster  
Party  
The Count  
5 inches tall  
\$40.00 kit

Dracula  
Windup  
Tintoy  
\$120.00

**COMING SOON**  
12 INCH TALL BOMBS  
FRANKENSTEIN ACTION FIGURE  
FROM SIDE SHOW TOYS  
CALL, E-MAIL FOR AVAILABILITY

GLORIOUS IN THE DARK  
AND TRANSPARENT  
"IN" BIG HEADS  
FROM SIDE SHOW TOYS  
CHOSEN FROM  
JAMES MCGILL  
AND THE MONSTERS  
REGULAR "IN" BIG THINGS  
AVAILABLE TOO  
VISIT OUR WEB SITE FOR  
UP TO DATE INFO AND  
AVAILABILITY!

**VILLAGE COMICS  
& COLLECTIBLES**

214 Sullivan Street  
New York, N.Y. 10012  
Phone : ( 212 ) 777-2770  
Fax : ( 212 ) 475-9727  
Email : [infosales@villagecomics.com](mailto:infosales@villagecomics.com)

Visit our websites : <http://www.villagecomics.com> \*\* Adults only : <http://www.villageerotica.com>



Now You Can Get the Original Soundtracks on NINE Terrific CDs!

# HAMMER HORROR



**TWINS OF EVIL:** The Harry Robinson score for the third film in Hammer's famous Karnstein Trilogy. Includes a 20-page booklet with special introductions by director John Hough and Evil Twin Mary Collinson. Only \$27.95

\*\*\*



**THE DEVIL RIDES OUT:** One of Hammer's greatest horror films produced one of James Bernard's greatest scores! Includes an 11-minute audio interview with Star Christopher Lee and a 20-page booklet with a special introduction by James Bernard! Only \$27.95

\*\*\*



**THE FRANKENSTEIN COLLECTION:** Music from all seven Hammer Frankenstein films, including FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN, FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED and FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL! Plus a 20-page booklet! Only \$27.95

**TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA:** James Bernard's stunning score for one of the most popular of Hammer's Dracula movies with Christopher Lee. Includes a 22-page booklet and a special introduction by Bernard. Only \$27.95

\*\*\*

**THE VAMPIRE LOVERS:** Harry Robinson's startling score for the first film in Hammer's famous Karnstein Trilogy. Includes a 20-page booklet chock full of pulse-pounding pix of Ingrid Pitt and other Scream Queens. Only \$27.95

\*\*\*

**THE MUMMY:** Franz Reizenstein's dynamic score for the 1959 horror classic. Includes a special introduction by Christopher Lee and a 16-page booklet! Only \$27.95

\*\*\*



**THE QUATERMASS COLLECTION:** James Bernard's music for THE QUATERMASS XPERIMENT and QUATERMASS 2, Tristram Cary's score for QUATERMASS AND THE PIT. Includes a 20-page booklet. Only \$27.95

\*\*\*

**Volume One:** BRIDES OF DRACULA, SHE, MOON ZERO TWO, LUST FOR A VAMPIRE, CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN, THE MUMMY, THE DEVIL RIDES OUT, TWINS OF EVIL, HORROR OF DRACULA, THE GORGON, HANDS OF THE RIPPER, THE CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB, CAPTAIN KRONOS VAMPIRE HUNTER, KISS OF THE VAMPIRE, WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH, FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED, LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES, SCARS OF DRACULA, BLOOD FROM THE MUMMY'S TOMB, DR. JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE, VAMPIRE LOVERS, TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA, CREATURES THE WORLD FORGOT, QUATERMASS AND THE PIT, and COUNTESS DRACULA. Only \$27.95!

\*\*\*



**Volume Two:** VAMPIRE CIRCUS, SATANIC RITES OF DRACULA, THE MUMMY'S SHROUD, FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL, DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE, THE WITCHES, VENGEANCE OF SHE, EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN, PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES, FEAR IN THE NIGHT, DEMONS OF THE MIND, FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN, PIRATES OF BLOOD RIVER, TO THE DEVIL A DAUGHTER, QUATERMASS 2, CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF, ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN, DRACULA AD 72, HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES, VAMPIRE CIRCUS, LOST CONTINENT, PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, RASPUTIN THE MAD MONK, SLAVE GIRLS, ONE MILLION YEARS B.C., and CRESCENDO. Only \$27.95

**Only \$27.95 Each!**

Send check or money order to  
Scarlet Street Music  
PO Box 604, Glen Rock, NJ 07452



Shipping in continental USA: \$2 first CD, \$1 each additional. CD Canada: \$4 first CD, \$2 each additional. CD Foreign: insured surface (for airmail, double rates) \$7 first CD, \$4 each additional. C.D. NJ residents add 6% sales tax. Allow 6 to 8 weeks for delivery.

Coming Up Soon: THE LOST CONTINENT and THE CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB





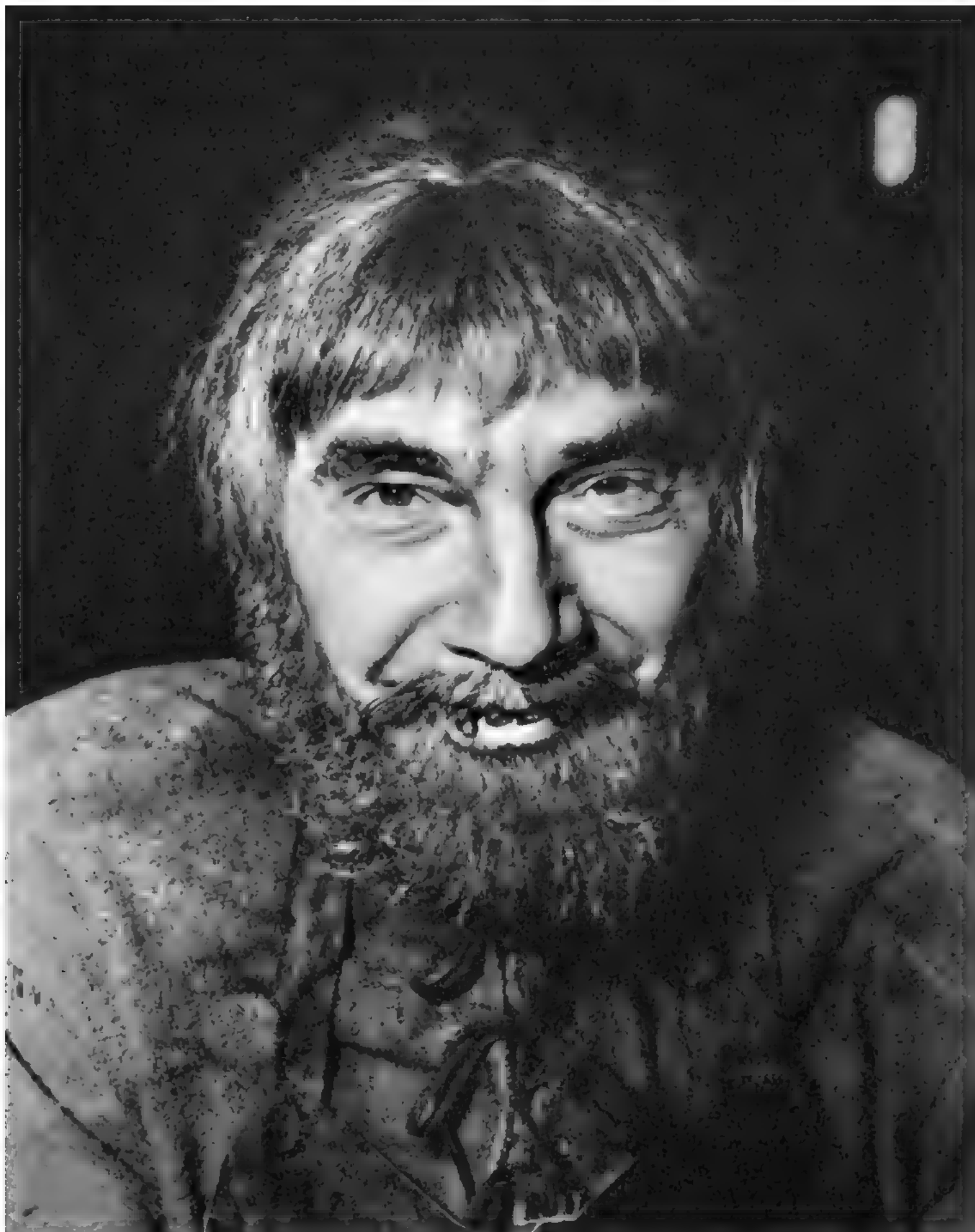












# "The WOLF MAN" Turns from Man to Beast...



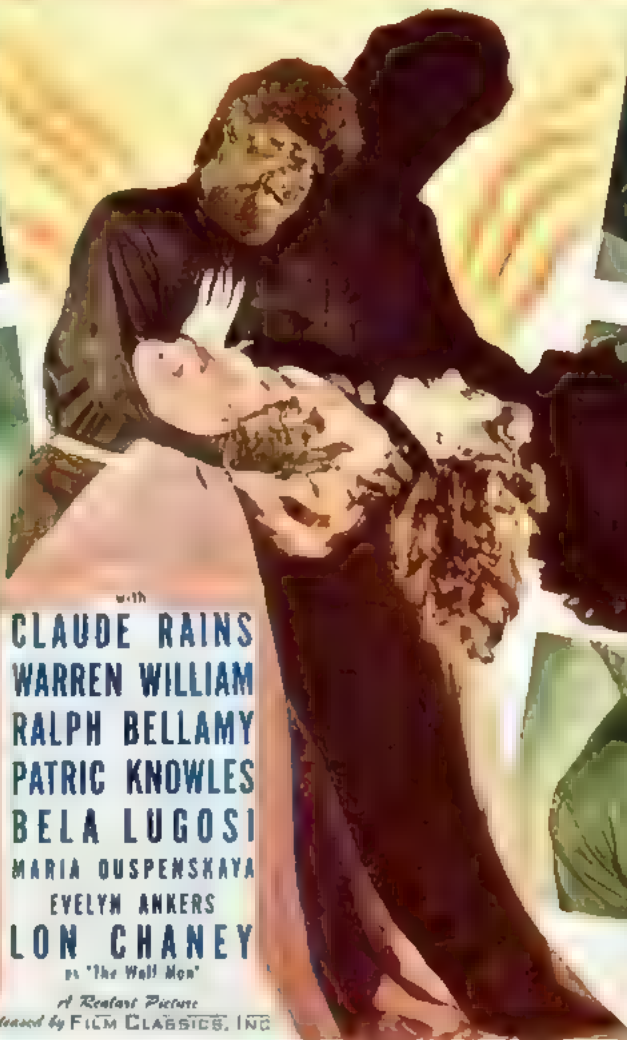
HIS FINGERS TURN TO CLAWS



HIS EYES GROW WILD



HIS FACE BECOMES A BEAST'S



with  
CLAUDE RAINS  
WARREN WILLIAM  
RALPH BELLAMY  
PATRIC KNOWLES  
BELA LUGOSI  
MARIA OUSPENSKAYA  
EVELYN ANKERS  
LON CHANEY

in "The Wolf Man"

A Realart Picture

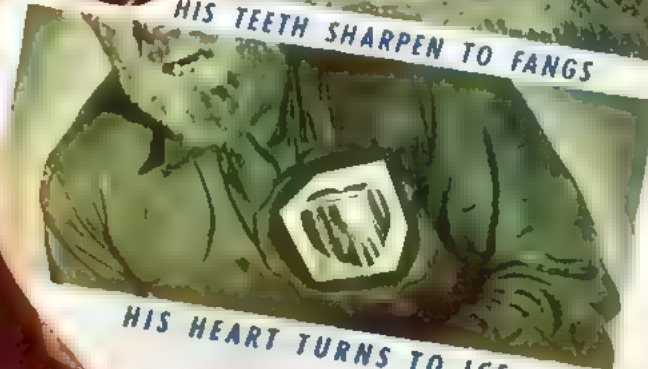
Released by FILM CLASSICS, INC.



HAIR GROWS ON HIS HANDS



HIS TEETH SHARPEN TO FANGS



HIS HEART TURNS TO ICE



REALART PICTURES Present  
**H. G. WELLS' Fantastic**  
OUT OF THIS WORLD  
Show

# The INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS

Realart  
PICTURES

with SIR CEDRIC HARDWICKE · VINCENT PRICE · NAN GREY · John SUTTON · Cecil KELLAWAY















HOWCO INTERNATIONAL presents  
**THE BRAIN** From **PLANET AROUS**

STARRING  
**JOHN AGAR • JOYCE MEADOWS • ROBERT FULLER**

with **THOMAS B. HENRY • KENNETH TERRELL • HENRY TRAVIS**

PRODUCED BY JACQUES WAGNON FILM • WRITTEN BY NATHAN HEWIT  
A MARQUETTE PRODUCTION • RELEASED BY HOWCO INTERNATIONAL



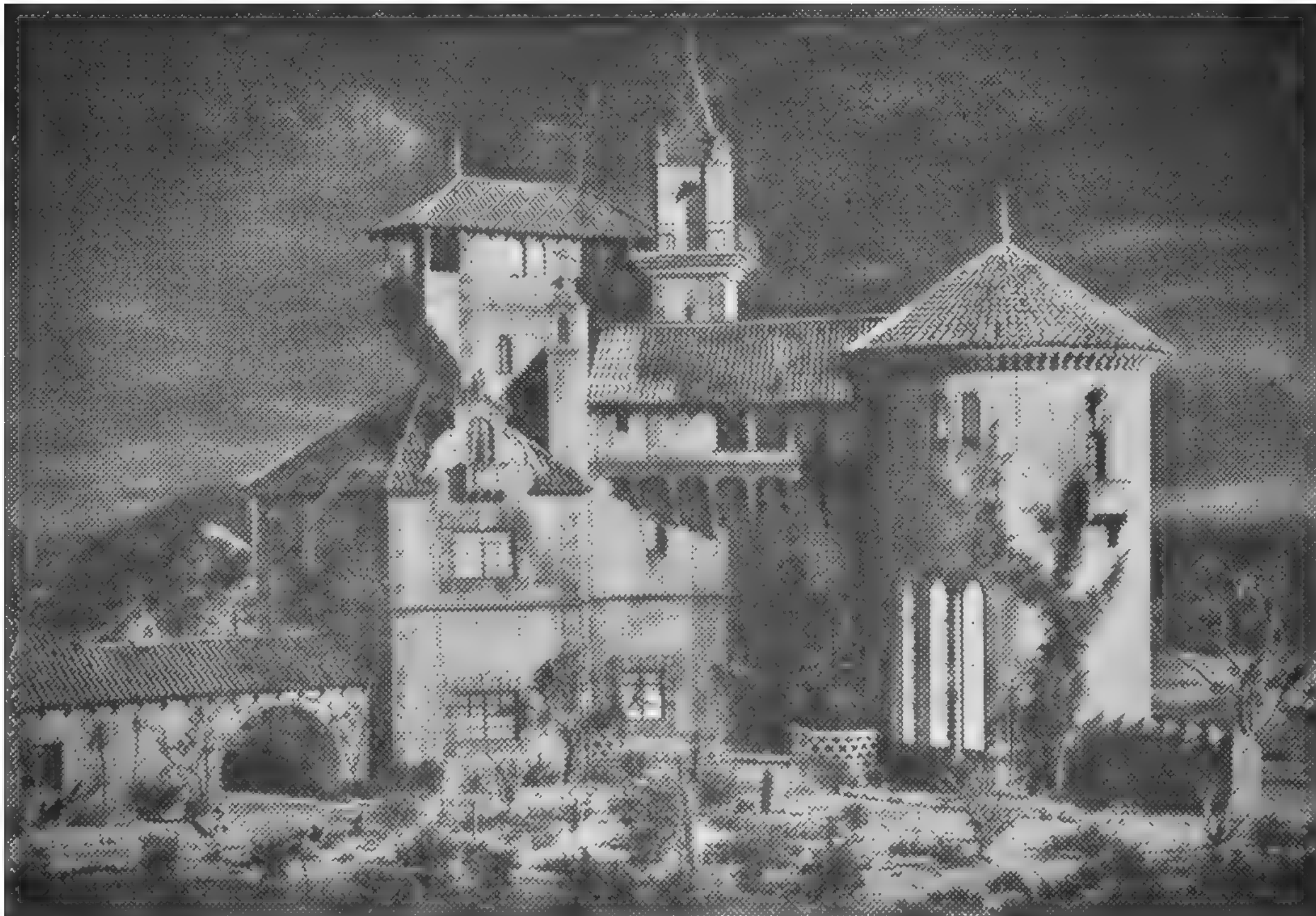




























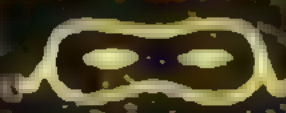
JOHN VAN S BRAINT / CURT STODMAK

NOW ONLY

15¢

SEPTEMBER

# BLACK MASK



GASOLINE

DALE CLARK  
AN O'HANNA  
NOVELETTE

JOHN K. BUTLER  
A ROD CASE  
NOVELETTE

PETER PAIGE  
W. T. BALLARD  
WILLIAM BRANDON

NOW ONLY

15¢

OCTOBER

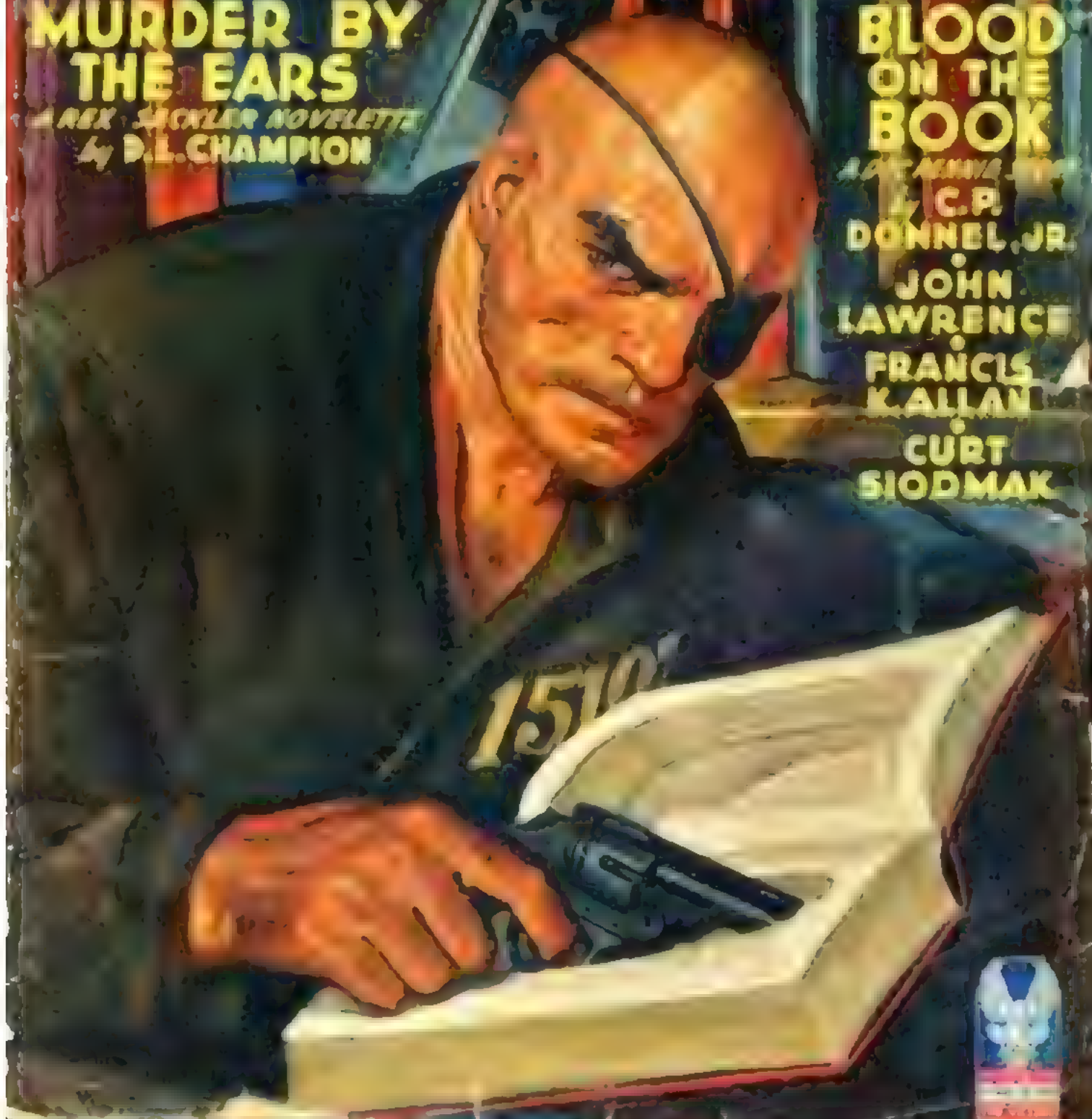
# BLACK MASK

**MURDER BY  
THE EARS**

A REX SICKLER NOVELETTE  
By D.L. CHAMPION

**BLOOD  
ON THE  
BOOK**

A DETECTIVE STORY  
By C.P.  
DONNEL, JR.  
JOHN  
LAWRENCE  
FRANCIS  
KALLAN  
CURT  
SIODMAK





HOW ONLY  
**15¢**

NOVEL

# BLACK MASK



**A TASTE FOR MURDER**

A CELLINI SMITH NOVELETTE  
by **ROBERT REEVES**

**NOW I  
SLAY  
ME—**

AN O'HANNA  
STORY BY  
**DALE CLARK**  
**NORBERT DAVIS**  
AND OTHERS

























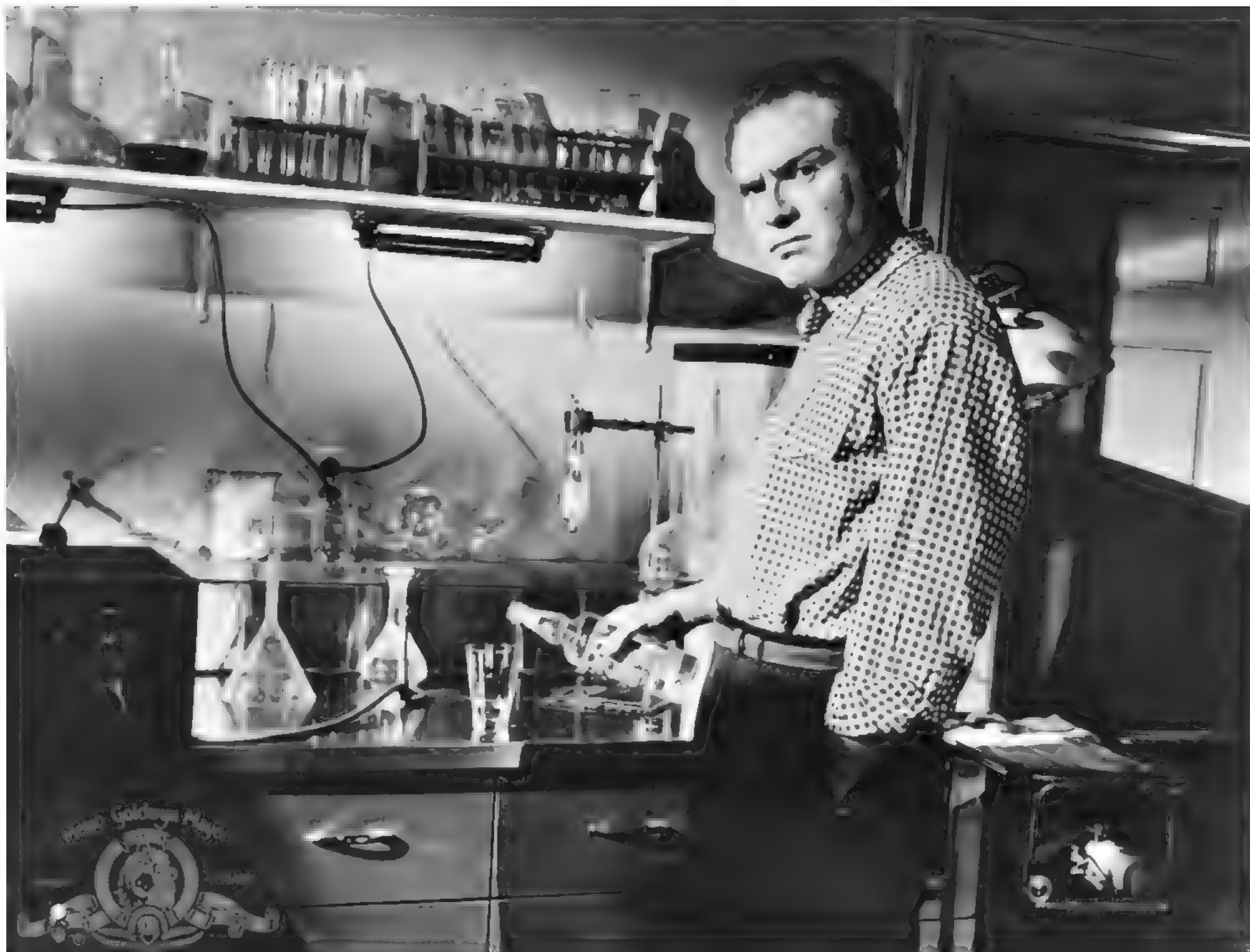




















A DEAD MAN'S BRAIN IN A HIDDEN LABORATORY TOLD HIM TO



KILL...KILL...KILL...KILL...KILL...KILL...KILL...KILL...KILL...KILL...



the hands belonged  
to her husband  
but his brain  
belonged to a man  
no longer a vet

ALLAN DOWLING PRESENTS

# DONOVAN'S BRAIN

LEW AYRES in  
"DONOVAN'S BRAIN"

co-starring GENE EVANS • NANCY DAVIS  
with STEVE BRODIE and TOM POWERS • USA HOWARD  
SCREENPLAY BY FELIX FEIST • PRODUCED BY TOM GRIES  
DIRECTED BY FELIX FEIST • A DOWLING PRODUCTIONS  
PRESENTATION • RELEASED THRU UNITED ARTISTS

The  
best letter  
that's been  
made  
in the  
theater







1029-20







DB-77



ALAN CRANFORD PRESENTS

# DONOVAN'S BRAIN

LEW AYRES DONOVAN'S BRAIN











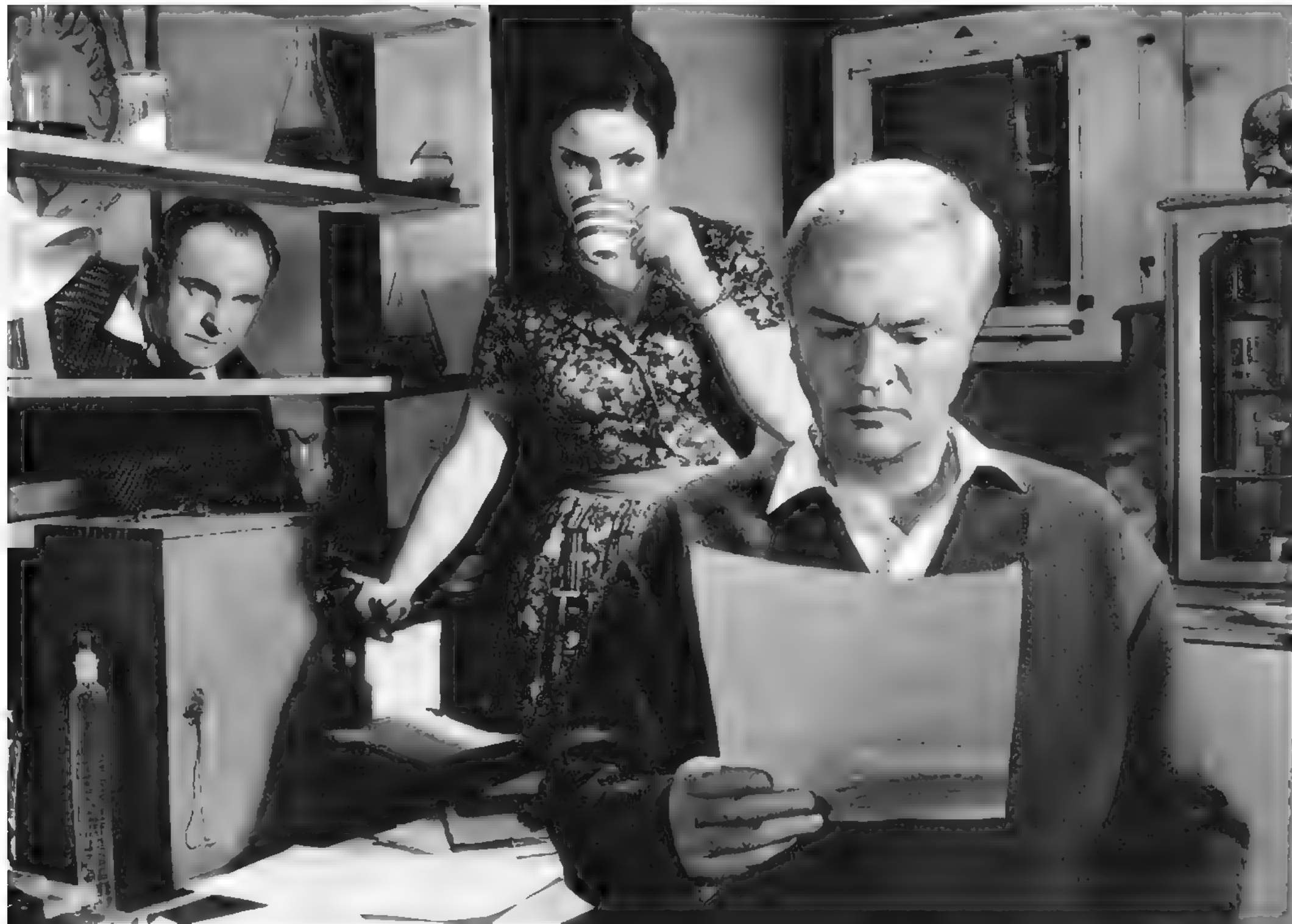
# *DONOVAN'S BRAIN*



**CURT SIODMAK**



















4-12-7







4-18-70



4-12-5



gettyimages  
© 2011 Getty Images







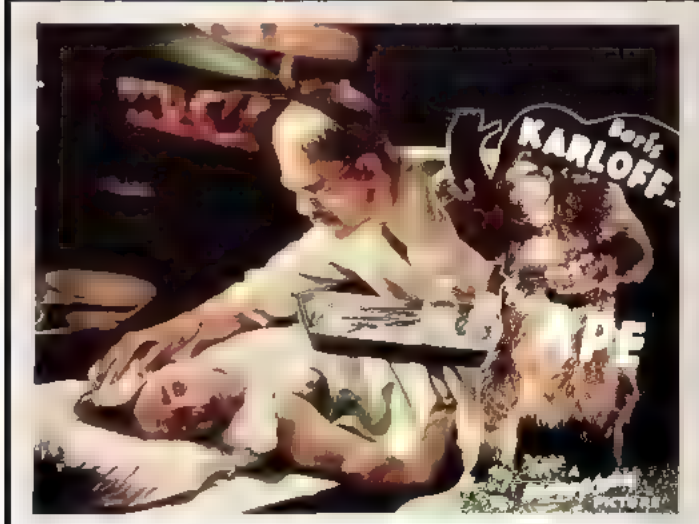
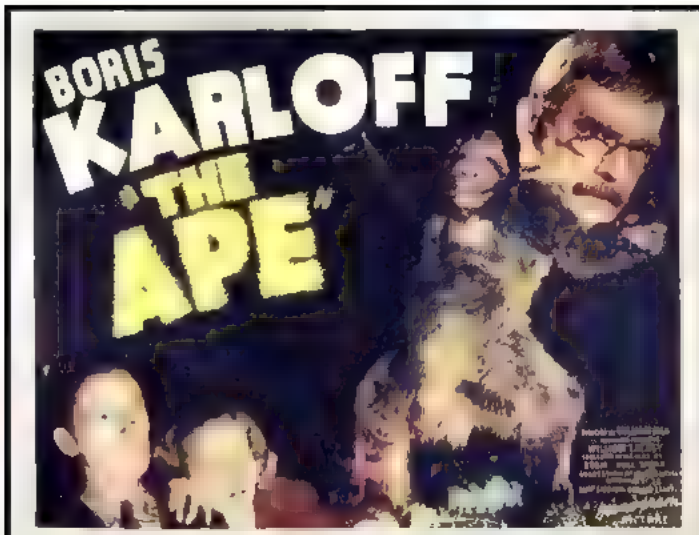


THE BRAIN  
FROM  
PLANET ANGUS































5101-117



































5/12/71





11533-53









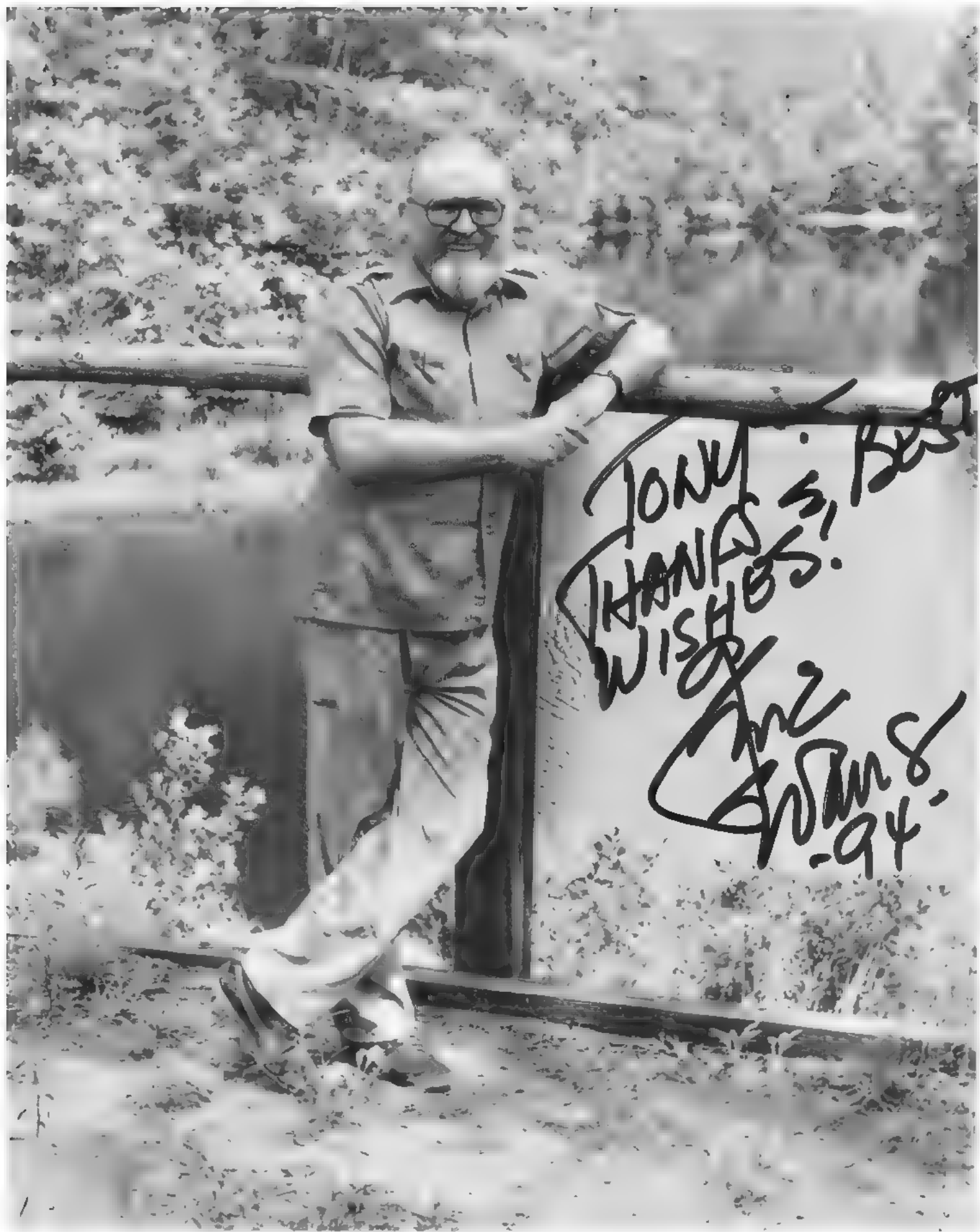




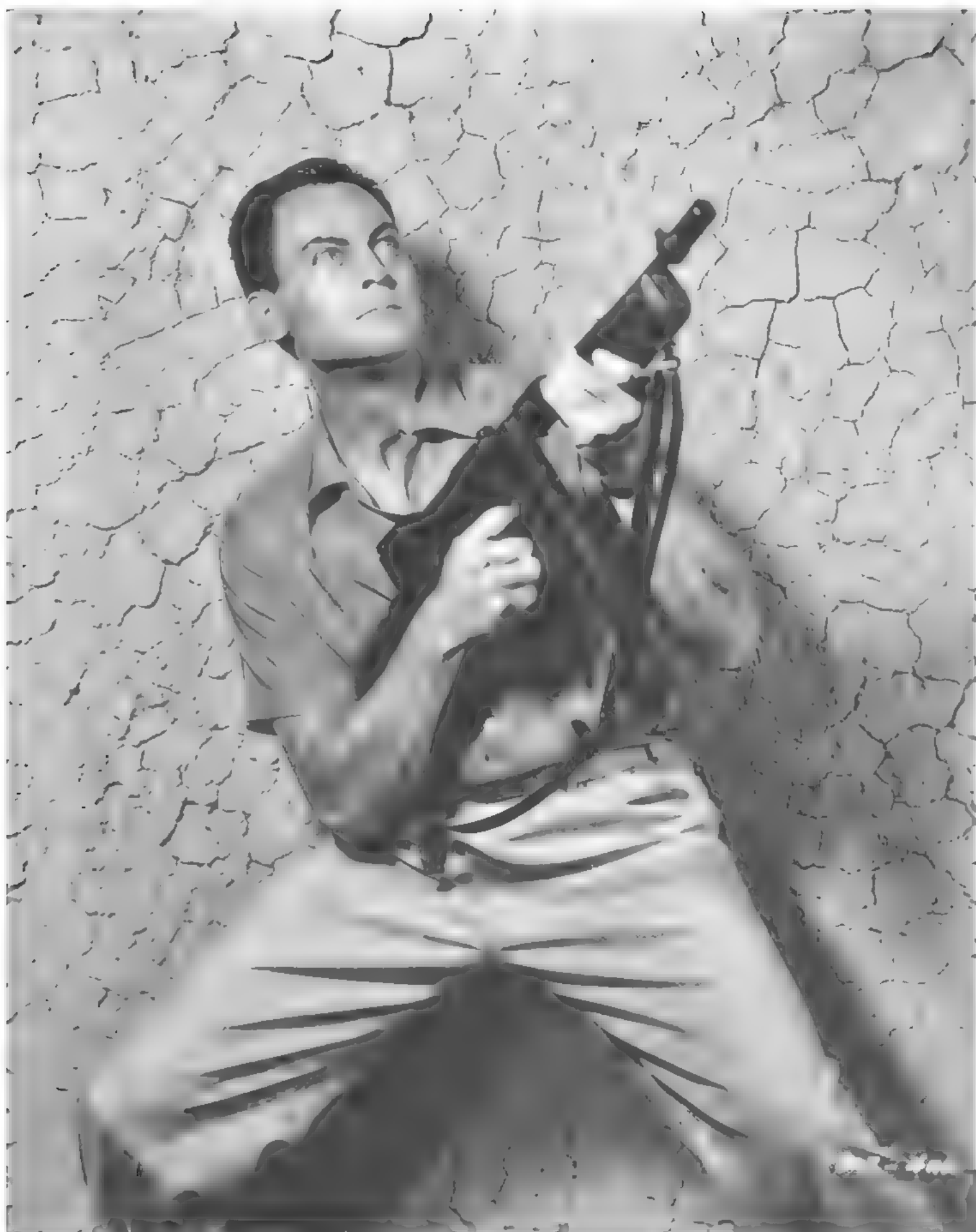






















George  
1940















1909-26

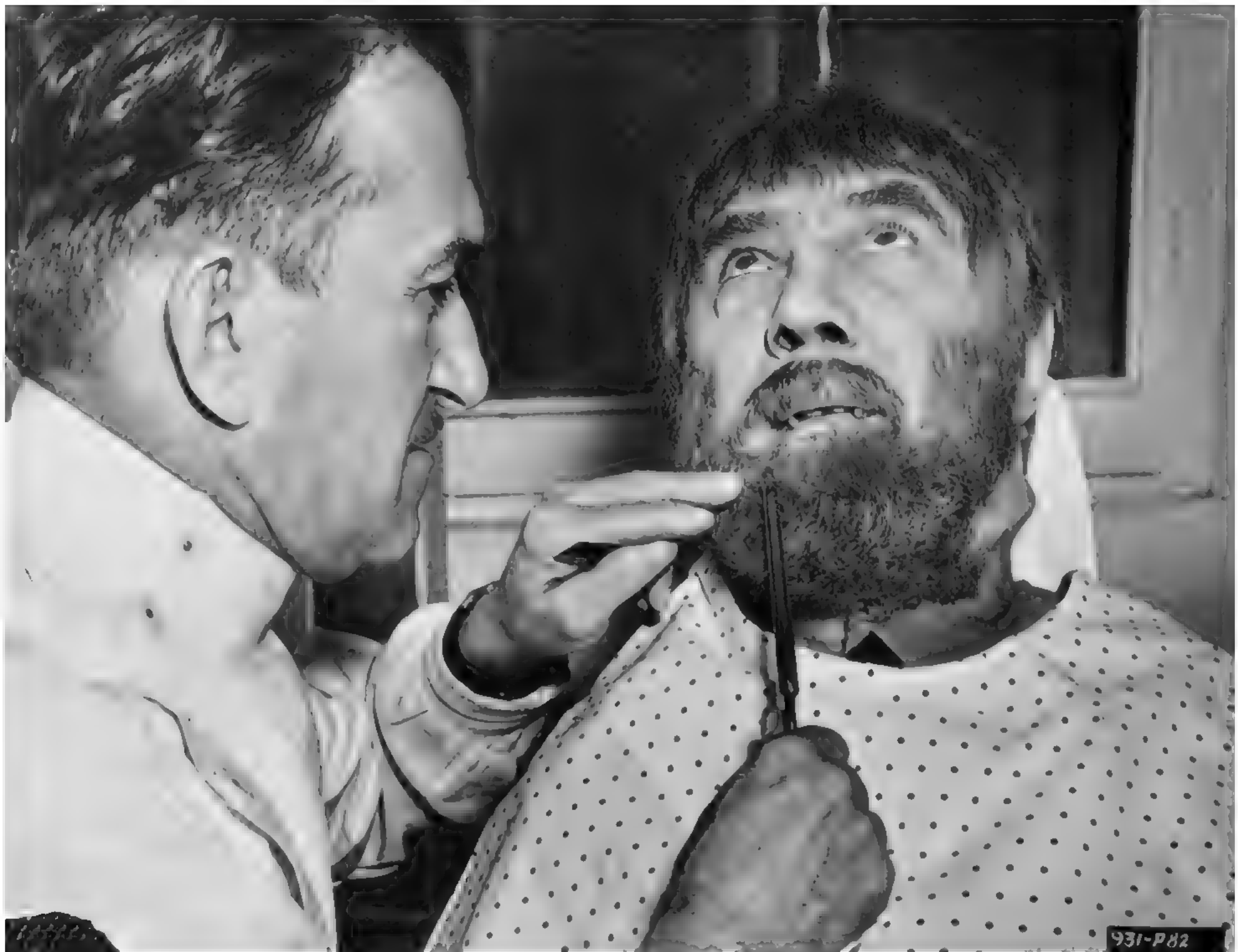






931-22-AD







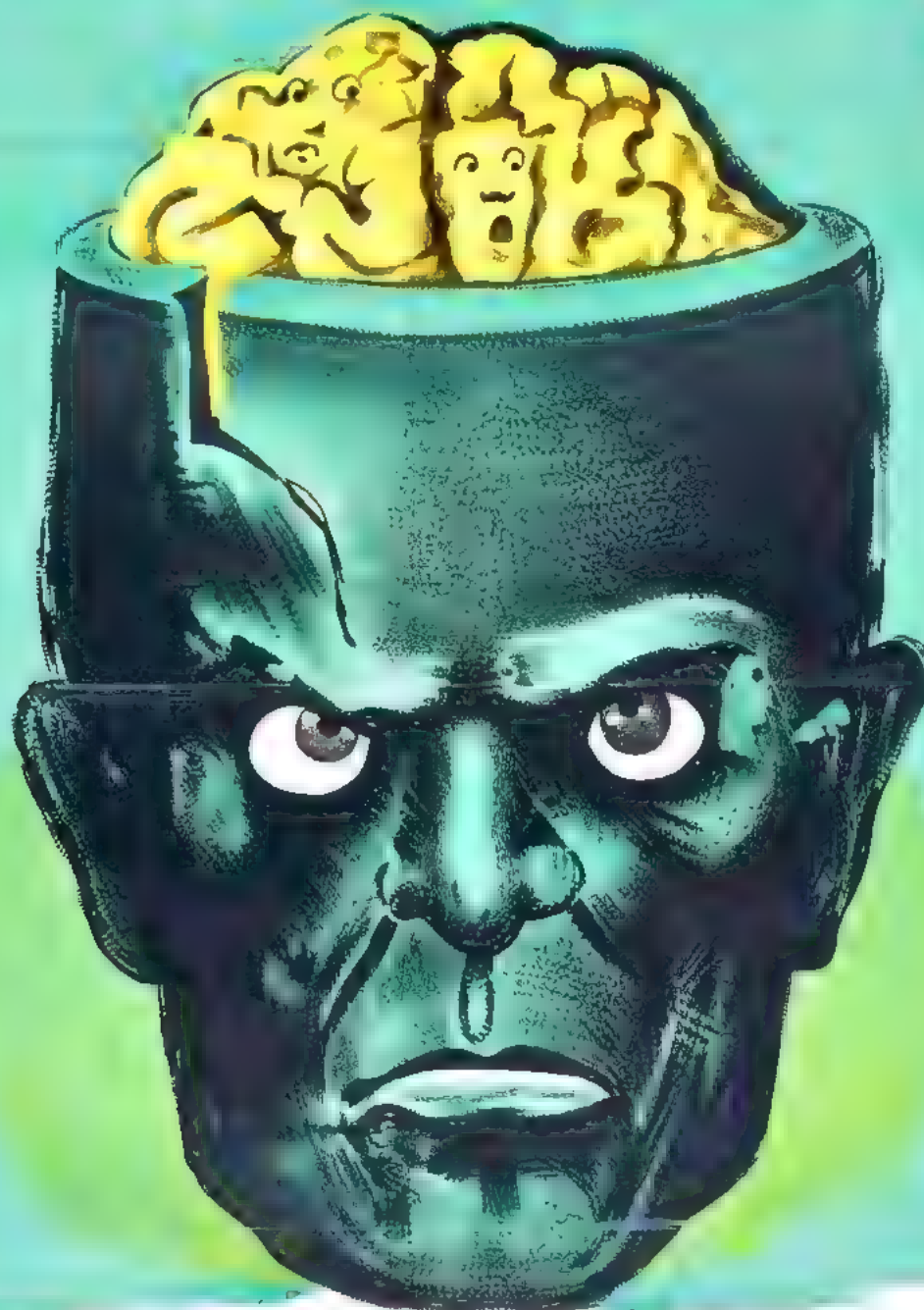
31-22





ANN  
HEYWOOD  
CECIL  
PARKER  
PETER  
VAN EYCK  
BERNARD  
LEE

DESDE LA MUERTE SIGUIO SU SIEMBRA  
DE LOCURA Y HORROR...



# EL CEREBRO VIVIENTE

DIRECCION DE FREDDIE FRANCIS • UN FILM DE LION INTERNATIONAL FILMS

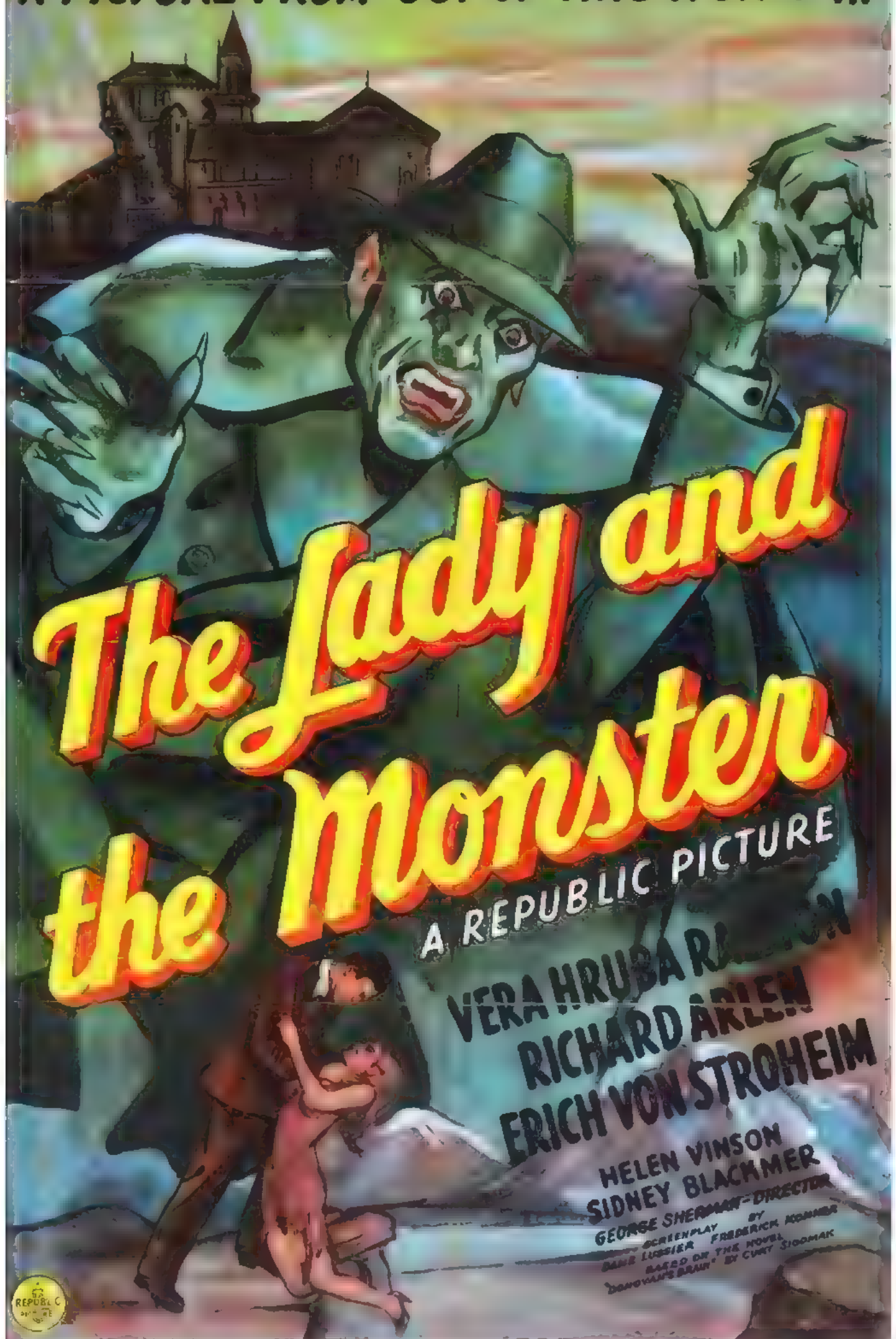
PRESENTADO POR SELECCIONES GALA

SOBRE LA FAMOSA NOVELA  
"DONOVAN'S BRAIN" DE CURT SIODMAK

DELTA KODAK - DOLBY DIGITAL - DOLBY DIGITAL



**A PICTURE FROM OUT OF THIS WORLD !!!**



# **The Lady and the Monster**

**A REPUBLIC PICTURE**

**VERA HRUBA  
RICHARD ARLEN  
ERICH VON STROHEIM**

**HELEN VINSON  
SIDNEY BLACKMER  
GEORGE SHERMAN-DIRECTOR**  
SCREENPLAY BY  
DANE LUSIER FREDERICK KONNER  
BASED ON THE NOVEL  
'DONOVAN'S BRAIN' BY CURT SIOGMAN















1195-49





